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SIMON OF CYRENE, DIMACHAERUS SPLENDENS

SIMON OF CYRENE, DIMACHAERUS SPLENDENS;

OR

The Story of a Man's (and a Nation's) Soul

By

THOMAS HALL SHASTID, M. D., Sc. D., etc.

S. Mark: 15:21: "And they compel one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, that he might bear His cross."

A Scrap of Paper Blown on the Author's Doorstep: "It is true that the outward signs are in the past, but the inner meaning of which those signs are symbols only, these are—"

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To

My Beloved Friend,

ANDERS GULLEIKSON HOVDE,

with whom, for joyous years, I have
travelled the alluring, if ever changing,
road of science

"There had come among them one who had studied many things, and yet he believed. A great surgeon, a man of knowledge, faith, prayer and works. And his light was that of a star in a dark world."

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INTRODUCTION

HERE, according to my view, is one of the best stories of ancient times which I have had the pleasure of reading. At the outset it captivates the attention, then it grows in depth and power with each successive chapter, almost with each successive paragraph. The climax at the close is, as I see it, rarely surpassed in any language.

It should be observed, first of all, that the tale is either an allegory or not, just as the reader chooses. Suppose, for a moment, that we call it an allegory. Now, ordinarily, an allegory is very dull reading. But the cause is this: The writers of most allegories, in their eagerness to represent some underlying (the allegorized) story by a primary (the allegorizing) story, fail to make the primary story interesting. Then the allegorized story itself is spoiled. This fault has, I think, been completely avoided by Doctor Shastid, who has so constructed his volume that it may be read with interest as mere story only and without the slightest care for the underlying sense, or, if the reader prefer, then also as an allegory and with even greater interest.

A word of caution to those who would take this splendid work with an eye to its deeper significance. The tale does not seek to allegorize the external, but the internal, history of Israel. It is, in fact, as its author calls it on the title-page, "the story of a nation's soul." Now it is true that, in order to exhibit the development of spiritual Israel, it was plainly necessary, from time to time, to display, or depict, one or another event of Jewish external history. For example, the crucifixion (an external event) undoubtedly had to be presented, or described, in order that the effect thereof on the Jewish inner consciousness might clearly be depicted throughout the later portions of the volume. But, in general, the external events of Jewish history are skillfully evaded, and only the great successive phases of Jewish soul-life are symbolized. Thus, in the Egyptian part of the book, the reaction of the Jewish nature to Egyptian idolatry is clearly and wonderfully represented; in the Petran portion, that to Nabathæan idolatry, and, in the Palestinian portion, that to the Syrian Baal worship, and so on. After the Babylonian captivity, as all readers know, there were no further lapses to idolatry, at least in the ordinary sense of the term.

The various periods of Jewish development, I should add, were not strictly successive or mutually exclusive, yet, in an allegory wherein one single person stands for the soul of an entire nation,

the facts must, as a matter of course, be somewhat simplified, and so the various periods of Jewish development do, in this book, become strictly successive and mutually exclusive. This sort of privilege, however, we grant to every allegorist as a kind of allegorical license.

Many parts of Doctor Shastid's story are sad beyond belief, some are gently comic, and a few are even repellent, but, everywhere, the book is, as I see it, strictly true to Bible chronicle, to post-biblical history, and to the various Bible prophecies. Opinions, of course, even of the highest authorities, differ on some of these points—a fact which must be borne in mind by the reader who cares for the deeper meaning of the book.

The author of the volume has, on every page, made manifest an intense and ever-increasing sympathy with the Jewish character—a character which, I may say in passing, is the greatest national character in all history. Not for nothing did God choose Israel to be unto Him as a nation of priests. Even in all their fallings to idolatry, the children of Israel, as is well known, never gave up their belief in the true God. The attempt was always to *add* whatever phase of idolatry chanced to be under consideration at the time, to the true worship of Jehovah—the results being, in each case, exactly as Doctor Shastid has symbolized them in his work. If, sometimes, the results were repellent, the facts could not be otherwise shown. How, in later times, the Jew has, in spite of himself, been a monument unto Jehovah-Jesus, Doctor Shastid has symbolized with wonderful appositeness and effect.

I cannot close without calling attention to the very pathetic portrait of the dear old Archon Basileus, as well as to those of the Seven Deadly Sins, and to Conatus "the man without a face." These figures will live in my memory forever. As to the friendship which Doctor Shastid has shown between Lampadephorus (not solely, if mostly, a Greek, but bearer of the ancient secular light, Greek or not-Greek) and Samson-Solomon (bearer of the light from above), this is, in my opinion, one of the finest depictions of any sort or kind of friendship outside the Bible itself. Moreover, it is strictly true to fact, as ancient records abundantly demonstrate.

My advice to one and all is to read this book: first for the sheer interest of the story itself, second for its great gallery of human portraits, third (and best of all) for its profound allegorical meaning.

ALBERT W. RYAN.

St. Paul's Rectory,
Duluth, Minn.

PART I
THE ROUGHING OUT

BOOK I. THE DREAM

CHAPTER I

Shem

The idolaters, meanwhile, were coming a little closer, and the sun had not yet risen. Old Shem therefore picked his way more cautiously than before, wishing that the rocks in the rough-paved streets of mad, half torchlit, inimical Cyrene were not so full of treacherous points to stumble on, and that the stern houses and brow-beating temples were not so full of accusing echoes. At length he saw very plainly that his doddering legs could not much longer keep him out of view of the worshippers of Bacchus and Aphrodite, so he began to cast around for a convenient hiding-place. As he came upon an open square, before the temple which was dedicate "Unto the Unknown God," he, fearing lest the light of the fast-approaching torches should open him out of the friendly arms of darkness, bent well over, and so crept softly up the temple steps.

But behold! as he reached the very top, there, in his haste, he dropped his staff, and ringing it went clean down to the bottom of the bronzy stair.

When he had got his staff and gone up the stairs again, he hid in the oblique, gliding shadow of a massy column, panting.

The crowd came ever nearer.

"Detested Greeks and Romans!" whispered the old man to himself, "what declare the wise Sopherim about you? Say they not—Accursed be the rays of thy lanterns and the light of thy torches!"

The crowd drew nearer and nearer, faster and faster, and just as they got anigh unto the temple steps, behold! there was one of the men in the press that attempted to flee from the tumult. But another, behind him, a tall, pale man, with strange lights in his calm, dead eyes, caught him, and casting him swiftly to the stones, planted a great dagger in his neck, so that the old Jew, Shem, as he stood behind the pillar, set up his hands before his face, and drew back farther into the shadow of the column.

One in the crowd cried, "Thou hast killed him, Ophidion!"

"In the name of Cæsar," replied the man addressed.

Then the crowd fled (Ophidion, however, last of all, and with

straight dignity), leaving the dead one in his own pool of shining blood.

Now Shem, at first, refrained from coming down, for he feared both the people and the watch. But after a little, espying in the far East the bright approach of dawn, and seeing a glint slip over the golden roofs of many temples until at length it came to lie upon a gable of the little old red synagogue[1]—the little old red synagogue, wherein, even now, early as was the hour, there appeared to exist, for some strange reason, an infinite refuge. Plucking up heart, he glided from the shadow, and so on, stumbling, down to the prostrate form in the street.

For a moment he stooped. "Art thou dead, O Friend? What say the Sopherim? May I be of service unto thee, albeit—paw!"

Now the old man clearly perceived that the victim was dead. Moreover, his own fingers were smeared to the palms with blood. If caught, too, he would surely be held as the murderer. He looked about, trembling, and sweated profusely. Then, thinking he heard approaching steps once more, he screamed: "Nay, nay! I did this foul thing not. Behold! It is solely the fruits of idolatry."

So screaming, he glanced hurriedly about again, hobbled quickly off, seeking shelter in the far-away synagogue.

And when he had come anigh thereunto, he beheld the Chazzan coming out—the Chazzan, with his tall form and beard of redness streaked with gray. Shem called unto the Chazzan as well as he could, and then leaned, hard panting, on his thick, crooked staff.

"The Lord—be—with thee," said he unto the Chazzan. "Bless me—bless me, O Betah. Bless any—that cometh in the name of the Lord. But wait. Be not—wroth at all with me. Breath! Breath! I have run. What say the Sopherim?—See! there is blood! The Sopherim! Here on my hands. I—innocent. Blood!"

The Chazzan raised his own holy hands in horror. His face grew pale, and he cried, stammering: "Blood! Blood! Whose blood have ye shed, Shem ben-Noah, ben-Adam? Have I not told thee to keep from idolaters? Say all unto me. Tell me naught but truth, that I rightly may lay this matter before the congregation."

Came Shem ben-Noah ben-Adam closer, and leaned upon his staff again. Said he, "Before the morning star had risen, and while the slumbers of my shepherds of the day and also of my dreaming son (he dreameth even in his sleep) were still unbroke, I came up out

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[1] There was a Jewish colony in Cyrenaica as early as 322 B. C. See "The Jewish Encyclopedia," article "Cyrenaica," also Hamilton, "Wanderings in North Africa" (1856), p. XVI.

of the pastures where my sheep feed, and so to the gate of this city and into its streets. For I sought the steward of my pastures and of my farms, even Trivialis—that mongrel which is partly Gaul, partly Iberian, partly Briton, and only Elohim knoweth—he is mongrel—hence the name I gave him—Mongrel—he is— And his mind is ever— That man hath been upon a mission for me to Rome—for me, his master. Last night—for so I have heard—he did arrive in the sea-port, Apollonia, and then was to have come these twelve miles further inland unto this city—this idolatrous and God-accursed city of Cyrene—at some dim hour. And I—as I knew he must surely have—money—much money—in his scrip—money—which money—got in godly ways—being mine— Well, I feared—"

"What fearedst thou, Shem ben-Noah?"

"What say the Sopherim? The Mongrel meaneth wisely, but he brawleth at times in taverns—and so, as I searched for him—I met—the accursed idolaters. They might have killed me, they might have killed me. I hid behind a column in the temple to the unknown god—I do forget his name—one of the idolaters—I do forget his name—before that very temple did murder another. The crowd fled. I went down, at length, and curiously examined. Then I heard more people, and I saw my hands red. I fled unto thee. I am innocent."

"Thou innocent!" cried the Chazzan indignantly, "thou innocent! Perhaps of this blood. But, in general, how innocent I do surely know."

"I protest— The Sopherim—"

"Let be the Sopherim. What hast thou to do with wisdom? Listen to me, for I have several heads whereon to counsel a man which standeth as high as thou dost in the synagogue. Thou speakest concerning idolatry, thou and the others of the congregation which are like unto thee, yet, in secret, do ye all long for the rites of the Molochites, for these and for the women which are sacred unto Aphrodite. Have ye not even made yourselves idols and brought sacrifices unto them, and kissed your hands to them, and fallen upon your knees and worshipped, saying: 'These dead things are gods, or else have gods within them'? And have ye not, then, also in the presence of these idols, committed abominations that tongue of mine can never utter even unto thee? Answer me this. Then will I say more."

"What declare the Sopherim?"

"Let be the Sopherim, I say, and answer."

"It is true. It is true. I have had some commerce with the

heathen. The sheep were needed by them for their sacrifices. I sold—they paid—I—I—"

"Stammer not, idolatrous old man."

"Idolatrous!"

"It is the very word. And now thou comest to me for protection. Well, I will see, on thy behalf, the ethnarch, that all thy doings on this day may be cleared of a charge. But, hearken!"

"I hear, O reverend keeper of the synagogue, but listen—"

"Interrupt me not. Tell me of thy steward and thy son. First, thy steward. Didst thou not send him on a black mission of revenge?"

"Not of blood, not of blood."

"But yet of revenge."

"How thou dost know these things I cannot clearly conceive. I cannot—"

"Revenge and hate, and only because one did outsell thee in the sheep market. What of the Sopherim now, Shem ben-Adam?"

"I must go seek that steward. With thy permission—"

"Depart not, but listen. What an ensample hast thou set for thy steward, what ensample yet again for thy son?"

"Sh-h-h! he cannot know—the son, the son. He knoweth nothing."

"Wilt ever interrupt? Is it for this, a perpetual breaking in, that the Lord, by the mouth of myself, hath informed thee, many a time and bitter, that the ways of idolatry are not as the ways of peace? Have we not indeed, both the Lord and I, shown unto thee those things with infinite patience and great suffering? How long—or rather is it well to talk with thee at all? Go into peace—but stop. Thy son. Hast thou reflected that, as yet, thou hast not lighted on a perfect name for him? What is his name?"

"I call him sometimes Samson and sometimes Solomon. These, surely, are great names, O Chazzan. None better, none better. And, as for his having two names, was not Israel himself both Israel and Jacob—sometimes even Jacob-Israel? And behold! the very country of which this city is the capital, is it not sometimes called Cyrenaica, sometimes Pentapolis?"

"Knowest thou not that, among our people, importance attacheth to the meaning of a name, so that, often, as a son doth come to manhood, his name is many times altered, even wholly set aside, so that ever the name may be to the person fitting? A name doth not signify naught. Choose therefore, and soon. Say whether ye will always have him called Samson, or whether always Solomon. I have thought much about thy son. Is he merely a man of bones and strength? If no, then why not solely call him Solomon?"

"He is, O Chazzan, both so strong and enduring (thou wouldst not believe how enduring he is) and yet too so wise that, as far as he is grown, I have not been able to choose for him either the one name or the other."

"Just, O vacillating old man, as thou hast never been able to choose between the mere frauds and ignorant devices of the heathen on the one hand, and the Lord thy God, who is El-Shaddai, on the other."

"I swear—"

"Take, as yet, no oath, but give more earnest heed to the things that still I have to tell thee. Know ye not that, even more than ever, the scornful finger of the Gentiles is pointed at us? The Romans make the ciconia, the Greeks ask if Messiah is not yet come, and the Berbers grunt at us or make sharp squeals like swine. Why is this?"

"It is for that we are followers of Elohim."

"It is for that we have backslidden, and, as we ourselves fail at the religion of El-Shaddai, so the heathen do not in any wise respect us for that religion. They will spit in our faces soon."

"In our faces. I have sinned."

"Thou hast sinned. Now hearken unto me, for else thou art lost in body and soul. Give up the ways of the heathen, leave those people for thine own. Obey the Almighty. Thou hast not forgotten. Obey. Remember His dictates. Let be the sacred women that hang about the purlieus of Aphrodite. Keep far away from them. Keep also far from the followers of Moloch. Keep far from all idolaters. Let the sons of tumult get their sheep from any that will sell to them, but not from thee. Sell thou in the public sheepmarket only. And once again listen!"

"I listen. I listen, O Betah, man of God."

"Then say unto me of a surety whether or not thou'lt do these things I have asked. Swear that never again wilt thou be caught among the heathen temples of a night. Swear."

"I swear."

"Swear that never again wilt thou be caught among the burners of the flesh of children. Swear."

"I swear."

"Swear that never again wilt thou consort with women that hang about the temples—those vile prostitutes. Swear."

"I swear, O Betah."

"Swear, last of all, that never again wilt thou permit thy steward or thy son, that they may do any of these things, and that never hereafter, so long as thou shalt live, wilt thou dispatch thy steward,

or any in the place of him (contrary to that which now thou intendest) on any mission to the ruin or the harming of thy fellow man."

Shem looked up quickly, wide-eyed, letting his big staff fall. "How knowest thou?"

"I know only thee, thy past. It telleth the future. Swear."

Shem gazed full in the Chazzan's eyes, beginning to think of indignant things to say to him, but the beauty and the awful majesty which sate on Betah's countenance were like as an ordering angel unto the Jew, and all the high rebellion of the sinner's proud heart was quickly crushed and held strongly downward, as if by the weight of a mighty millstone.

"I swear."

"Then keep thine oath. So let us all do, we that are children of Israel. Then shall we see, on a day, Him that is sent of the Father, and know from His lips the secret of eternal life."

Now, even as Betah spake, there chanced to pass by a man of the Nations which was called Vectis—for many a mighty thing hath happened by chance, which is God. And Vectis heard but these five words—"the secret of eternal life." Yet the mighty syllables took hold and moved him, so that he said: "Behold, I shall soon die (being old) and go down into the dust, and I fain would know the secret of life eternal."

He went to a wine-shop near the Temple to the Unknown God, where Ophidion had murdered a man.

He grew more and more sad, because he knew not the secret of eternal life.

Another, coming in, sate beside him, ordered and drank. Soon said he to Vectis, "Tell me thy name—thou lookest melancholy. My name is Rota, A Wheel."

Said Vectis, "My name is Vectis, A Lever. And I am sad because of a certain mystery which lately I have heard about, namely: 'The Secret of Eternal Life.' Knowest thou that secret, Rota?"

Rota, who had started to sing a ribald song, replied: "Nay, I do not." His face became all at once sad, and he pondered deeply. The longer he pondered, the sadder he became. Then, "I should have thought about this thing long time before." He arose and went away, declaring: "I will speak with many men of wisdom; for lo, I am weary and anxious of heart, and I, too, would know the mystery of this matter."

And, unlike Vectis, who soon forgot about the whole thing, Rota wandered very long and learned of many matters in many lands, and later (though he never knew that fact) became as a mighty

hand for the preservation of Samson-Solomon, the son of Shem ben-Noah ben-Adam.

Meanwhile, Betah, man of God, still adjured old Shem, as the two stood before the synagogue: "Swear."

"I swear."

"Yonder, then, in the place of gambling, is thy steward. Wait thou near in the shrubbery, and thou shalt see him, and not thyself go in. Remember thine oath."

"I will remember. And when I have found my steward—" He looked, being worn and weary with the terrors of the night, not at the tavern, but into the South, far in the way of his sheepfields. He forgot even the presence of the mighty Chazzan, and for this, that he thought only of his son—his son, whose ways, except for the time of a certain imprisonment, had been as the ways of peace.

CHAPTER II

Out of the Cain Life Called

Peace indeed lay over the early morning fields and fastnesses of Cyrenaica. Even in the rock-bound fold where Samson (or Solomon) ben-Shem ben-Noah ben-Adam had slept the starlit night away, there appeared to be peace. And yet, at the side of the fold, without the thorny wall thereof, lay the carcase of a giant wolf, still stiffening and grinning hideously—a wolf which the hands of Samson-Solomon had torn asunder in the deep night and had flung in hottest hate without the walls. To attack his father's sheep! There had been no fear in the lad. He was solely anxious for his father's sheep. And now, arisen from light slumber, he dropped to his knees. "Adonai!" He could speak no further for a time. Then, "Elohim! I, who am Samson-Solomon, the son of Shem, do worship and adore thee. Hear, El-Shaddai! It is I, a shepherd lad of Cyrenaica who speaketh unto thee. It is I indeed. Thou that hast made the world, the sheep, my father and myself, I do adore thee, O Adonai! There is none like unto thee, from everlasting unto everlasting." For a while he paused as if in a fever of agony, then he cried out, all of a sudden: "Idolatry! Keep me away from idolatry, O Lord, O God! From idols and all idolatry keep thou me far away."

He ran from his place, and tore his black hair and rent his strong inner garment, and beat his head against the stones that formed the sheepfold wall. And the sheep, because of the turmoil, and also

because they were very hungry, came bleating up around him, while, far behind, indifferent, the foul-smelling goats assembled.

When thus he beheld his flocks, he began to be more at peace, for he was concerned about them.

He went and took his great crook and wide scrip, and lifting from his breast his little shepherd's pipes, placed them to his now happy lips. How the little sheep skipped and danced! He loved the sheep. He loved also to pipe to the sheep.

He opened the gate of the fold, and went on out of the place, and, counting the sheep and the goats, each one as it came from the fold in its turn, he closed up the entrance, and again began to play upon his shepherd-pipes.

And, so playing, he led both the sheep and the goats in the way which they should go, calling from time to time in the intervals of his playing: "Here, Ringstrake! Here, Blackie! What do ye, O Flower of White and Almond Blossom? Spotty, Spotty! Hither, hither, Black-eye! Keep ye close beside me, else ye be lost!" He took the flock along a thin, winding path, which now and then vanished utterly, to reappear, natheless, and run, zigzag or winding, up hills with fearful rocky rims, then down again in dark many-recessed ravines, and round about the borders of the meadow where poisonous grasses grew, silphium and the like. One of the paths led off to a hidden precipice. Another, to a neighboring vineyard. "What, Wanderers! will ye not be led? Will ye go indeed to the neighbor's vineyards and his fields, and so be forfeited, or will ye over the precipice and be slain? Once when I myself did wander, I was captured and sold to the King of the South. Listen to another of the instruments which I shall play—a harp which lately I have built for only you, and also to a song which only for you I have made."

He played upon his harp and sang sweet songs both of brooks and of happy meadows, but ever and again he closed with words of excellence about the Lord. So he came at length to a running stream.

The goats rushed up before the sheep, and drank at once their thirsty fill, but the sheep drank not, for that the water was running.

And he built a little dam at one side of the stream, formed there so a quiet pool, and all the sheep did come and drink of the still waters.

The shepherd delighted in the sheep, and he kept the goats from hurting them, and after a time he led them all far away, where excellent pasture was, and then, having taken from his scrip his bread and drink, and having eaten and drunken, he counted the sheep and

the goats again, and, playing a little while once more upon his pipe, let fall that instrument and wandered off into many strange thoughts and visions.

Now, for that the man was deeply religious from his birth, and also because this early quality had been developed and made far stronger by the deep hill-quiet in which he lived, by the sights of pastures and of stars (the excellent beauties of his shepherd world) he dreamed at first of God. In all the solitude of hill and field, the blue expanse of sky by day, the shining mazzaroth at night, he felt—Jehovah! El-Shaddai! Elohim! Adonai! Oh Adonai, Adonai, Adonai! Unto what should he liken Adonai? Now there came into his heart a sudden wish that he might behold Adonai. The boy's whole soul uprose from the vanities of time into the riches of eternity and God's everlasting love. "Oh Adonai!" He prayed once more unto Adonai. But still, although he was truly praying in the spirit, he was yet in his senses troubled for that he still desired to see God's very face—to behold that countenance as he did behold a star, a rock, a tree, and to listen to Adonai's voice, even as he ofttimes listened to the winds, to the sheep, to the echoing thunders. Why could he not see and hear Adonai, even touch his hand and press his worshipful lips upon it? He wished Adonai for his friend.

The boy, as often was his use, did talk to himself for a certain while, and after a little counting of his sheep, he went, as in a dream indeed, and lifted up a massive stone that was very much larger than himself, and placed it on the summit of a high hill. Then he took leaves and tinder, and placed them on the stone, and, next, with steel and flint, struck fire. The tinder and the leaves caught, and the boy fell prostrate, crying: "O Lord God, that art above and apart from these!" And all that arose in his heart will no other man know.

After a time he got to his knees, and, lifting his hands to heaven, cried: "Adonai, I have made an altar to thee. I do adore and worship thee, and also I do love thee; but if it shall be as a thing that delighteth thy heart, then suffer thou me to look upon thee with mine eyes. Permit me to behold thy countenance, and hear thy voice. I would be as thy friend, O Adonai El-Shaddai."

Came upon him as it were a master in the shape of a wish to cry unto the stone itself which formed the altar: "Thou art Adonai. I will love thee, ever obey thee." But he held himself in crook, as his self were a sheep, until, with a great uprising of the soul, he saw in a nearby tree, a hideous hawk. Out loud: "Thou, O Excellent One, art Adonai!" He fell down flat on his face, and worshipped the hawk.

Then rose quickly, and fled from the spot, and went and got his sheep and goats together (which had widely strayed) and led them off to other pastures. For he said in his soul, "Idolatry. So also I did whenas I was captive to the King in the South. Child as I was, thou didst seduce me, Temunah, priestess of all wrong. Thy influence still I feel."

He brought the bleating flocks to a pasture overlooking the road which ran from the city of Cyrene out into the desert. And behold a caravan of men on horses[1] was coming from the desert, and he watched the caravan until it wound well up among the tombs which lined the way on the right hand and again on the left, just ere the way did enter into the marble terraces which made the city of Cyrene.

And there came into the boy's mind a sermon which once he had heard in the little synagogue, wherein the snowy-headed preacher had said unto the congregation (making allegories) that the life of a man resembles the coming of a caravan from the desert, forasmuch as it doth emerge from mystery, is seen for but a very little while, then doth disappear among the tombs—these signifying death. Yet later, he had said that the caravans might find a goodly city of the living—a goodly city and a beautiful—beyond the regions of the dead.

And Samson-Solomon stood up, and gazed out into the desert. Said he, "Yea, all is mystery. The tombs and the city themselves are mystery."

He looked in all the other ways, and at length up into the sky. "In every way in which I look there is mystery. Yea, every way I look. Man himself is mystery. The sheep and the goats, they also are nothing but mystery, even they. Who, then, shall explain Adonai?"

He yearned pitifully toward the sheep and the goats, for that these creatures were a portion of the great mystery of which he was himself a part, even the Lord also. He thought, "Mayhap I am meant to be a preacher." Then he remembered his late idolatries. "No, no. I am much too vile a wretch that ever I should become a koheleth. I shall be only shepherd. That liketh me best in any case. Or else I shall be a merchant like the one ruling the caravan that just now went by."

And there stirred within him something, he knew not what.

He counted his sheep and his goats, went on again unto yet higher ground, where he knew he might observe the city of Cyrene more

[1] On the very late introduction of camels into Cyrenaica, see Lefébure, "Le Chameau en Égypte," in "Actes du XIV Congrés International des Orientalistes, Alger, 1905," Deuxiême Partie, pp. 50-55.

plainly. And behold! there was coming from the gate of the city a roaring multitude, and one who bore a cross. The cross was laid down. When it was raised, there was one (as he could barely see) fixed upon it. And he knew that that man must be some malefactor. He turned away his head, looking past the city, past its sea-port Apollonia—a long white streak running beside the blue ocean.

He thought of the commerce which he knew that the caravans took to that port, to be laden upon ships. Something in him again stirred.

But when he had glanced once more at the cross, and the thing he knew to be a man upon it, said he: "No, no. I will only be a shepherd. Not for Augustus Cæsar himself, ruler of the whole world— Here is quietness and peace. I shall never be aught but a shepherd."

He lay down and slept.

And behold, in his dreams, it seemed that an excellent voice, but sad beyond the sadness of all the world, came unto him, saying: "Samson! Solomon! I have many great things for thee to do."

He opened his eyes, and there, betwixt him and the city, rapidly running down the steep hillside, was the beautiful maiden which dwelt in the synagogue with the old Chazzan, Betah, she that was all obedience, righteousness, purity and love.

And he perceived that the maiden was calling unto him, but, as yet, he could not quite make out her voice. Perhaps because of the sweetly solemn dream that still lingered in him, he felt, as he watched her bright and beautiful coming, a premonition as of things beyond the realm of time, things which could never be altered by the will of any man, howsoever skilful and howsoever enduring.

By this the young girl had come anigh unto him. He called to her, being eager in the matter: "The Lord be praised for thee, O Amahnah. Hast thou some heavy message for me?"

She lifted her face, and answered and said unto him: "The Lord be gracious to thee. I come from the Chazzan. I have tidings and a command. Thy father—both Shem ben-Adam and also the man thy father doth name the Mongrel, or Trivialis, he that is made of many nations and is thy father's steward—they two are sorely beset by idolaters. Haste therefore, unto them, and get them out of harm."

But Samson answered, "The sheep!"

Said Amahnah, "Talkest thou of sheep, when the beni-Adam, the children of men, are in danger? Go to the city, taking thy sling and thy strong staff, and I will press on farther into the fields, till I

find another shepherd (albeit he is only a hireling). Then will I follow thee."

She darted in among the hills, and was lost to view.

Now the melancholy cries of innumerable sheep came to Samson's ears (for that the animals required shepherding) stirring within his soul a marvelous feeling of responsibility, a well-nigh intolerable presage of great sorrow, of incalculable doom, disaster.

Yet the young man set briskly forth.

As he ran upon the way, however, he began to remember many things, even to vision and to dream a little. After a time he loitered, being held as in a vise by the thought of his recent idolatry. He saw with crystal inner eye that he must be either a worshipper of El-Shaddai or else an idolater. Both he could not be. His soul was troubled: he tried to think of other things.

He therefore recalled Trivialis, his father's steward, a person given at many seasons to drinking unwatered wines. He hated that man for the jests he had uttered about El-Shaddai, hated the very stoop of his shoulders, the colors of his robe: so that of a sudden he felt a furious leaping up of strength. He thought he had the jester's brittle bones in his fingers. He brake the bones—as it seemed—cast them away.

And behold, he had broken his shepherd's crook, and cast away that!

Then his heart was troubled. Said he, "What is this which thou hast done? Wilt thou destroy thy father's steward, the man trusted of thy father?" He did remind himself of many a fond little thing which the jester had made, in years gone by, as for him, even Samson-Solomon of Cyrene: how the Mongrel had built for him little clay caravans of horses, like to the caravans of Cyrenaica, yet again of camels and swift-running dromedaries, like the caravans of Egypt. He yearned at the recollection. Said he: "Yet I would have slain this man. I am Cain, I am Cain."

He saw that one or the other of two plain ways he must take as concerning Trivialis. He either must hate him and kill him, or else love him and forgive.

The sun grew brighter. He said, "I will love my father's steward and forgive him."

"I will help thee," said a gentle voice.

Turning, he beheld Amahnah, who was coming up behind. Said she, "I have got thee help for the sheep, now I will also help thee that thou do no sin. But let us hasten. Truly the idolaters beset thy father and his steward sorely."

So they took each other by the hand, and ran. And the dreaming boy beheld their shadows stretching out before them over the varying roughnesses of the highway, torn and distorted and mangled, but united in the dust.

Said Amahnah, "See how fast we go! I am bringing thy strength to succor them. Behold! the world is full of a great joy!"

. . . . Now, old Shem, when the Chazzan had gone back into the synagogue, went to the wine-house which the Chazzan had pointed out to him, and, taking his place among the trees at the side of the square before the temple, began, as he watched the wine-house doorway, to murmur about the Sopherim. Had not Rabbi Nechuniah, for one ensample, exclaimed: "I thank thee, O Lord my God, that thou hast cast my lot amongst those who frequent the schools, and not among the idlers of the wine-shops: I run and they run, I run towards everlasting life, and they flee to the pit"? And again had not the Scriptures said, "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine." And yet again, had not the Sopherim in Jerusalem declared—

But Shem arrived not at the end of the saying, for a mighty noise issued from the wine-house. Then the steward, Trivialis, scrip in one hand, bulging wine-skin in the other, came running forth also, flushed and with loud laughter, and with the old caupona (keeper of the tavern) after him. Behind the caupona roared a crowd of drunken Berbers, Greeks, and Romans, some with drawn knives, others with clubs. "Down with the stealer of the wine-skin! By Bacchus! By Hercules!"

And the Chazzan, Betah, peering from the door of the synagogue, and seeing the old man, Shem, start out of the shrubbery, as if he did intend some sort of succor for his steward, called unto him Amahnah, and dispatched her to the country, saying: "Haste thee! Tarry not! Samson! The idolaters attack both Trivialis and Shem."

But soldiers of the watch, whenas the maiden had departed, coming round a temple corner, and seeing the disorder and the fighting, dispersed the combatants quickly, and getting the skin for themselves, marched off rejoicing.

Then called unto him the old Jew his steward, and said: "What thing is this which thou hast done? Laugh not, but declare. What say the Sopherim? 'A man of levity is like a tree without root. It easily dieth.'"

Then said Trivialis, who still did hold his scrip: "Laugh I? I have much to laugh at. Sometimes it seemeth, Master, as if all

the world were made for laughing. It is full of jokes and the queerest—good wines also. But hold thine aged hands out. Heft the scrip which now I return."

Reached out Shem his hands, and his steward placed the scrip between them. The hands could not support the scrip, for it was too heavy. The bag fell to the ground.

Then laughed Trivialis another time, saying: "Have I root? The root of evil. Yea and pearls and rubies also. What told I thee ere I started on my journey? Said I not, 'For myself I have no luck; for another great success always'?"

"What! hast thou revenged me on that man of blood and brass? Is it true?"

"I have revenged thee," said the steward, picking up the scrip. "The man hath lost his business utterly, is ruined. Nor can the law ever touch thee. And, even while I did the thing thou hadst ordered me to do, I earned thee all this wealth."

Then cast old Shem his trembling arms about the steward. Said he, "I have done thee wrong, O my steward. I knew thee for a bibber of wines— What say the Sopherim? But tell me about the voyage, and about thee and thy health."

"My health is perfect. The voyage was beautiful. I played jokes on captain and passengers alike. Yet I drank no wine till thy plan of revenge was fully consummated. Then, having attended to my master's business, I did allow myself some little—well, thou knowest."

"I know. And now, good servant, I will reward thee richly when we get again home. Meantime— Pardon, O Son, I truly must give thee a little advice—a little instruction— What say the Sopherim? Say they not that a word in season is like rain in the spring? Yes, so those men, those holy men, do surely say. But now for the instruction.

"Behold, I mean as concerning my son, Samson. Now listen. Keep thou from rousing that young man's anger toward thee. He is stronger than lions, and stubborn—thou wouldst not believe."

"I have seen that, Master. All that know the young lad say from time to time, he will be a person inflexible. Rather, they say, You can bend him but you cannot break him."

Shem: "He hath given me much concern in this matter—this way in which he doth ever, having formed a purpose, hang to it. His dear mother, Shemaiah, when still she lived, tried, but in vain, to wean him of all that, and I have attempted to correct it, even by violence. It was all exactly as if we had not tried. His mother and I shed many a tear about that. Yet sometimes I have thought that

perhaps the Nameless One had in this quality of Samson, or Solomon, some deep purpose of His own."

Trivialis: "The old Chazzan hath indeed said so, and he hath also had dreams concerning the matter, such as that an angel hath said unto him that the Lord hath had a purpose in this, the inflexible will of thy son. And, ever since I became a proselyte of the Gate, I too have thought that the dream of the Chazzan might have boded truly."

Shem: "Being of such a stubborn disposition, then, he should be taunted no more. He is ill, too much aroused. He would follow thee over the earth. I cannot understand his vengefulness. And, in particular, avoid slighting reference to the Chazzan's dreams about him, especially mock not his lineage, his family, his race, his tribal ancestry, his descent from Abraham—his holy title to the priesthood, for he comes of Aaron. Thou lookest down, I see. It is well. Thou art ashamed. Be not so roysterous. Thou art a good, grave man, an excellent servant—and yet— His strength is as the strength of many tempests, and his soul, though loving, is fierce. My son! My son! At times, Trivialis, thou tryest him sorely. I fear, I fear. I fear both for thee and for him. Wilt thou not promise me—"

The tears fell down the old man's cheeks.

Then dropped to the ground Trivialis of Cyrene, steward of Shem ben-Adam. He took his master's garments in his fingers, and did himself weep. He kissed the hem of the simlah again and yet again. Cried he to his master, "I have sinned, I have sinned. I know not what demon entereth into me, but, at times, when I see anyone serious or serene, I am constrained forcibly to mock him. Yet, after all, I may love him, O Master. What was I when thou didst find me? A slave in the old city of Occidentalis, a slave to Ignorantia. Are not my shoulders bent and twisted still with all that aforetime servitude? Thou—dost not thou remember also?"

"I remember."

"Aye, Master, thou didst liberate me. Then thou gavest me, further, knowledge of the sun-dial, taught me the Mazzaroth— I am ever thy debtor; I dwell in the tents of Shem; I shall not forget."

"Enough!"

"Thou gavest me also the stone of Opportunitas, the which she had given unto thee in times gone before. See, I still have it here—here at the end of a chain about my neck. How clear and green this stone, symbol of youth and hope, opportunity itself! What a lustre! What a light! How the buyers of gems, the changers of money—"

"Enough. It is thine. Thou didst earn it well, for thou—"

"But the unlawful son of Ignorantia—Avidus? Dost thou not remember him also?—I am fain to laugh."

"Enough! Enough!"

"But Avidus, Avidus and Ignorantia!"

"Mind not Avidus and Ignorantia, for now, O my steward, I would say unto thee that, barring thy levity, and, ofttimes, thy scornful mocking, thou hast more than repaid me all that I have ever done for thee. Rise, then. Up! So, embrace me. And now that thou hast accomplished so much on this, thy dangerous journey just passed, I will even send thee at once on yet another journey. Wilt thou go?"

Trivialis saith, "I will go."

And after a little further discourse about the matter, Shem commanded him: "Take, therefore, with thee large sums of money. And set up, even there in Rhodes, a competing shop, in the Street of the Tripods, beside the little inn of Nemesis. Sell there oil and figs below the price at which the man can buy them. Then shall Hostilis be also ruined. He did my father a great injury, Hostilis. Besides, he hath mocked at Adonai. Violate no law, but, wherever the man doth set up a shop—be not merciful. Remember. Swear."

"I swear," said the steward, "but—what say the Sopherim?—See! There cometh a crowd back from the amphitheatre, and, as it seemeth, in an ugly mood, which bodeth no good for us Jews."

"Thou a— Let us on, then, to the synagogue yard," said Shem. "Meanwhile, say nothing unto my son, Samson, as concerneth thy scheme for revenge. He is young. He is apt to draw conclusions. God protect him and keep him from all idolatries. My son, my son! Would my son were here."

"Thou hast thy wish," said the steward, "I am fain to laugh."

And behold! both Samson and Amahnah coming in from the country.

The Chazzan motioned them all to come to the synagogue yard. There he took Trivialis apart, and questioned him about the perils of his recent journey—the sweet, old, dignified Chazzan, with his fatherly ways, his deep serenity, his rare, mysterious wisdom. And the steward was bashful before him, and cast his timid glances to the ground.

But Samson and Amahnah went over before the synagogue. And the maiden looked at the lad, and loved him for his strength and great tenacity of purpose and for his adoration of the Lord. And Samson saw the maiden also, her simplicity of heart, her obedience,

her wisdom and her love of duty. But he knew not that he loved her. So he merely declared unto her, "Thou seemest to me always, O Amahnah, to dwell very near to the beautiful presence of El-Shaddai."

She said unto him, "Dwell there with me."

"I know that El-Shaddai liveth," said the lad, "for I hear His voice in every little wind that bloweth and in the loud thunder, and I can see about me ten thousand things which He hath done and which no one else than He could do."

And Samson feared to tell her that he longed to behold Adonai El-Shaddai with his eyes, to speak with Him, to take Him by the hand, to be His friend. He said further only, "My father and the steward are going. Peace be unto thee."

She answered, "Go into peace," and made him a heavenly gesture both of tenderness and love.

But the Chazzan came to Samson. And his countenance was as the countenance of Moses and them that were with him, and that were before him, and that were a little after him. Taking a *theca*, or locket, which hung about his own neck, he placed the chain about the neck of Samson, saying: "Behold, O Samson-Solomon, my son! I knew thee in the school.[1] And later I have seen that thou art a man to be trusted. Not all are so. Hence, now, I give to thee this precious gift. 'Twas always thine, even from the foundations. 'Twas thine or ere I found thee in the prison of the King of the South, and thence did, with many a wandering, fetch thee. Ensealed in the *theca* are three bright pearls, which, on a day, thou'lt know the meaning of. Around these pearls a bit of parchment. On the parchment thou shalt find, plain writ, the proof and witness of thy lineage.[2] Thou, as thou knowest, art surely descended from the tribe of Levi, the family of Aaron, and even of the course of Jedaiah, so that thou art relative unto the great High Priest in Jerusalem. Is it not so? It is so, my son.

[1] The Chazzan, or "Officer of the Synagogue," was, not only in Palestine but throughout the Diaspora, the regular school-master for Jewish children.

[2] With regard to the keeping of priests' genealogies in those days, Flavius Josephus, writing just a little later than the time above supposed (he was born 37 A. D.) has the following passage: "For our forefathers did not only appoint the best of these priests, and those that attended upon the Divine worship, for that design from the beginning, but made provision that the stock of the priests should continue unmixed and pure; for he who is partaker of the priesthood must propagate of a wife of the same nation. . . . . And this is our practice not only in Judea, but wheresoever any body of men of our nation do live; and even there an exact catalogue of our priests' marriages is kept; I mean at Egypt and at Babylon, or in any other place of the rest of the habitable earth, whithersoever our priests are scattered; for they send to Jerusalem the ancient names of their parents in writing, as well as those of their remoter ancestors, and signify who are the witnesses also."—"Against Apion," Book I, Sec. 7.

"But thy genealogy, it is only in the Jerusalem records and on the parchment in this locket. Keep thou, then, the locket: for it may be that the High Priest in Jerusalem shall not be favorable unto thee, on the day when thou shalt go up unto him, and then thou shalt surely need that the proof of thy lineage shall be in thine own very hands. Thou art a humble kinsman, he a great—"

"I will keep the locket, O Father."

"It is well. I gave it not unto Shem, because he was not wholly Adonai's, as thee I know indeed to be. Moreover, he never would care with his heart to allege his birth and title to the priesthood. But thou—thou—" He looked afar off, as if he were seeing the face of curious things. Then again he gazed at Samson.

Samson said, "I am glad to have this locket. It may some time happen that I shall go to Jerusalem, and there shall seek to establish my title, and so become a priest."

Betah: "Son, there hath been given unto me a prophetic eye. And I do clearly behold that, even shouldst thou follow thine own base passions (which Heaven forbid) even so thou wouldst still be on thy way to that which thou couldst not prevent, even though thou wouldst."

"O Father," said Samson then, "I never will go to Jerusalem. But yet I promise thee truly, by all the laws thou gavest me whenas I was captive unto the King of the South—yea, and later also—that I will ever keep the locket."

"Thou wilt go to Jerusalem. But, O my son, promise. Promise me holily thou'lt never loose this locket from its chain, its chain from off thy neck, or open the locket out of any cause, lest, didst thou otherwise, the parchment or the pearls were wholly lost forever, thy title to the priesthood with them."

"Father, I promise."

"It is well. I long have known thee for a lad of strength and great endurance, as well as of deep religious qualities. But, O my son!"

"Father?"

"The very depth and high sincerity of thy religiousness is apt to lead thee astray."

"Me! Father!"

"Thou hangest thy head. Remember. Go into peace."

But Samson-Solomon at first would not go, being in a strange terror.

Said the Chazzan: "Thy very name, which is Samson-Solomon, meaneth Strength and Wisdom. My name, it is Betah, which, by

interpretation, meaneth Hope. And hope give I unto thee, as unto many another, but unto thee first of all. Thou hast had calls from Elohim ere now, and shalt have them hereafter. For lo! the Lord will have thee with Him once and yet again. And He shall speak to thee at times throughout thy life. Fear not, so long as thou art faithful. But if thou shalt be unfaithful, and shalt persevere in thine unfaithfulness, then shalt thou be a wanderer among the nations. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot. Thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

"But how goodly are thy tents, O Samson-Solomon of Cyrenaica! Thou hast the strength of the wild-ox and the wisdom of a thousand foxes. Even if thou shalt fail in the duties of thy priesthood, even then thou shalt have a bright and morning star to be as a guide to thee in the ways where thou shalt wander."

"But—I am full of sin," groaned the lad, remembering the hawk.

Betah, thereupon, lifted up his hands in prayer, saying: "O Lord, if now thou wilt forgive his sin—; but, if not, blot *me,* I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written."

And Samson, seeing that the old man loved him so dearly, wept in the extreme.

And when Betah had made an end of praying, he stood for a very long time, looking, as one that saw afar, into the dim ways of the East. Then again, looking, as one that saw afar, into the still mistier ways of the West.

He passed into the synagogue.

Said Samson's father unto him, "Go, son, unto my house in the country, thou and Trivialis also. As for me, I have both buying and selling to see to in the sheep-market. I will come when all is finished. What say the Sopherim? Go in peace."

So Samson and the steward went into the country, and the earliest words that the steward uttered to the son of Shem were: "I am fain to laugh."

"Why, O man of many nations," asked the lad, "art thou compelled to laughter?"

"Oh, for just nothing at all."

"Then thou laughest easily."

"Thou hast a certain locket."

"Truly. 'Tis my pride."

"Now thou lookest an it were a young Roman boy, with his bulla still about his neck. To what heathen woman wilt thou give the bauble? To a harlot? Nay, nay; blush not. I see thou hast had thy thoughts already. I knew not I should come so close."

But Samson remembered that the man was the trusted of his father. So he smote him not, neither answered he him bitterly.

And still the steward grew more and more insolent, so that the Jew remained behind and loitered in the roadway. And behold! before they twain had gotten home, the sun was a-sinking.

Samson went into the house, and passed the merry shepherds in the courtyard, saluting them not, and on to his private chamber, which was on the roof. And there he cursed with a most bitter heart Trivialis. Again and yet again cursed he him, invoking Heaven that that man might never more have peace. And he took up another shepherd's staff and brake it into fragments, crying: "So would I do to thee, and more also, O Trivialis, detested mongrel of all the nations."

Then he said, of a sudden, "Oh, I have sinned. The man is well loved of my father. I have sinned. I, also, will love him. And hath he not made me out of clay both horses and camels and little swift dromedaries?"

He saw once more that he should have to love this trivial man with all his heart or else slay him. Therefore said he, "I will teach myself to love the man, and that with all my soul. For I would not slay him. He is not altogether bad, and he pleaseth the heart of my father."

And at this there came up from the court a chorus of shrill cries from the servingmen and from the servingwomen, and also from Trivialis, and from many of the shepherds. "Oh, woe is me, woe is me! That I had never seen this day!"

There entered at his door the old Chazzan, and also closed it, saying: "Open not the door again, my son, until I have told thee all.—Behold the fruits of idolatry! I have preached and the Lord hath taught by the lips of myself and by rabbis, but behold! the workers of iniquity, they continue in their evil ways.—Release me, O my son, and shake me not to pieces.

"Have I not ever said unto thy father what the end of his ways must surely be?—Rend not my garments, Son, but tear rather thine own. Thy father, when he left thee and Trivialis, whither did he stray? Unto the women that worship in the temple of Aphrodite. O my son, my son."

Samson cryeth, "My father! Is he dead?"

The Chazzan said unto him, "No one knoweth who hath killed him."

And when the boy had rushed down into the courtyard and gazed on the face of his father, and all the gaping wounds in his breast, then said unto him the Chazzan: "Knowest thou not, O Son, that it is not well that anyone should gaze for long on the face of a man lying asleep?"

So he led the lad aside, and the body was wrapped in perfumed linen cloths, and the "travelling dress" put on it. And the thumbs were turned till the hands did spell the dread word "Shaddai," and bound up with a zizit. Then a shard was laid across the eyes, a staff beneath the hands, and a pillow of earth beneath the head, from the Valley of Jehosaphat, which lieth to the eastward of Jerusalem.

And the neighbors came from far and near and mourned exceedingly.

And, on the morrow, a rabbi who had been sent for from afar, arrived, and the Chazzan came also again, and the funeral words were spoken, and the body carried out from the house. Then took Leah, which was also Amahnah, all the couches and the chairs and reversed them. And, having done this, she and the other women led the way in the funeral procession—for woman, as the Rabbi said unto them (and as was the custom at a funeral in those days) having brought death into the world, should lead the way to the tomb.

And they marched on toward the city, and when they had come to the tomb in which Shemaiah lay, they took the corpse of Shem, and laid it by her.

And then they returned to their houses of life.

And Samson-Solomon, when he had got back unto the house which had been his father's, and was now his, found melancholy joy in all the various objects which had once belonged to Shem. Yea, all that was in the court was very dear to him—the shepherds' crooks hanging upon the walls, the pipes, the harps, even the dry skins of sheep, the sprigs of last year's silphium. There in a corner he beheld with new delight a miniature of the temple in Jerusalem—a bungling thing which the hand of Trivialis had attempted to fashion. Ah, that ineffable temple! He would stand before it on a certain day. It was wholly a building of glory, wholly a thing of Adonai's—could be viewed, too, in the very place of Him, El-Shaddai. There was that in the Temple which might actually be caught up by the fleshly vision—the snowy marble and the gleaming gold; likewise that which

might be heard by the fleshly ear—the singing and the melting tubes of the tremulous water-organ; and even savored as an odor—the sweet, mysterious incense, rising up, like tangible prayer, to heaven.

Then he fingered the locket on his breast, and said: "I shall be a priest within that temple, a priest unto the Almighty. I must ever keep this locket."

But the Chazzan came in, bringing by the hand Amahnah.

He taketh the young Jew apart, and saith unto him: "See! This maiden was a foundling. Do not the Sopherim call such an one 'The Child of God'? But behold! I would have thee to take her for the wife of thy bosom, and to be unto thee as the promise of the Lord, for thou art meant as a priest in the temple of the Most High. For her name, which is Leah (or Labor) is it not also Amahnah, or Berith, which, in the language of our people (which was given unto us by God) signifieth 'Promise,' or 'Covenant'?"

But Samson said unto him, "I do thank thee, and bless thee. Yet is it truly needful that one should marry in great haste? I have beheld few women, and am very young. Let me, therefore, be alone awhile, and, in the course of my meditations, I may chance to think of the thing which I ought to do."

The Chazzan answered him, "My Son, my Son! I fear thou art a prodigal with time. But do as thou wilt for a season, then call back the counsel I have given thee, and look upon Amahnah, for none there is that is like unto her, either for wisdom, or for beauty, or for any good thing at all. Hast thou the locket yet? It is well. I will leave thee now, but Amahnah shall stay for a season, and see that thy house is set in order."

And the Chazzan went his way, but Amahnah remained, and Samson, as he looked upon her, beheld that she turned and looked at him. And he saw that her heart was pure, and that all her countenance was very beautiful, because the radiancy of her spirit did shine therethrough.

And about this time a company of shepherds came, with unceremonious hilarity, with pipe and with tabret, with harp and sweetest singing. And Amahnah set to work to get them entertainment, and to put much meat before them.

And when they had eaten, they went, and Samson with them, to look after the sheep. And when Samson had found his own dear flock, then the hireling shepherds went on to their pastures also.

But Samson discovered a great consolation in his sheep, and was very kind unto them. He played upon a little harp, and sang, and the sheep skipped and the young lambs gambolled. Samson said in

his heart: "I will keep the steward of my father, and he shall be my steward also. I will make him better, if that may be, but in every case will I love him, for behold was he not the steward of my father?"

He played again upon his harp.

But out of the flocks behold! there ran one, an old he-goat and headstrong. And he climbed, as is often the way of a foolish goat, up into the twisted branches of a hideous thorn-tree.

And Samson, half forgetting all his recent sorrow and good resolutions, cried out in anger at the goat: "I will name thee Trivialis, sinful one. Thou art ever attempting the things thou canst not safely do, and so dost come by thorns and bruises. Ho! let me help thee, Beelzebub, spite of thy foolish wanderings. So—let me help thee."

The goat would not come down, but tried instead to get his horns against his helper. The shepherd, waxing very wroth, struck out at him, as he might at a wolf, and the goat fell out of the tree, and seemed, for the turning of a hand, to have perished. But then awoke suddenly to life, and so ran off to a little distance, where, with a comical bleat or two, he fell straight over and was indeed dead.

"Hadst thou not rather herd swine?" cried a voice of jeering. Samson, as he turned, beheld Trivialis. And he hated in that moment the very look of the man, even his vesture—the somber cloak, with spots and rings of red upon it, as if the wearer had just committed a murder (but unto Trivialis—as Samson well perceived—the spottings were comicalities). And the eyes of Trivialis were far too bright from unwatered wine and all manner of clownishness and sheer hollow mocks.

"Good steward!" cried the boy, with much consideration (seeing that the soul of him was vexed) "dost thou know whether the black ewe yielded in the night, or whether anyone was with her? It is time, the shepherds say—"

"What know I of ewes, black or white—unless it be a woman? A steward unto a Hebrew, I understand but swine."

Then he cast a stone, and it fell at the feet of the Jew. And he cried, "What say ye? Let us talk of swine, O priest of the great Sheckinah—which meaneth 'the chief of all the swine.'" And coming up close, he grasped the locket that was round the young lad's neck, shouting: "What is within? The tooth of a sucking pig, I warrant, or somebody's foreskin." And he tried to break the locket from its chain, crying: "To what prostitute wilt thou give it—unto Amahnah?"

Then arose in the soul of Samson all the hard-hammered hate of white-hot years.

And he struck therewith, as it were with a weapon of strong iron.

Then he stood for a moment, thinking that the flow of time itself had eternally stopped. What thing was this that lay upon the ground?

He cried with a shriek, "Father! Adonai! Cain!"

From a block of granite in a far-off hill came a maddening echo, "Cain!" And the lad leaped up and ran, like one that saw not, across the very body, and stumbled over it, and fell prone.

Arising, he forced his eyes to close again, that he might believe that the body was not before him. Yet he saw it, then, with even a greater distinctness than before.

So he took his crook now and struck an acacia, as if it were a man. Then he dropped, wide-eyed, the crook, leaned over, beheld some terrible contortion, picked up his club and ran away—only, at some other acacia, to act out once again the utter tragedy of his ruined life.

And so he repeated incessantly till he came to the road that led to his father's tomb. And there he lifted up the club for good and all, and ran, as it were to a city of refuge, until he had reached the tomb.

He said to himself, "I will hide in the tomb till the evening hath fallen, and then I will slip away to Apollonia and so to Rome. There no man shall ever find me, but I will remain in hiding through the remainder of my life."

He tore away the bars which closed the door of the tomb. And entered the place, and fell upon his knees, and cried with all his might: "Oh, Adonai, Adonai! I have sinned. Wishest thou the locket? I had thought that thou didst have for me some special purpose. Did not so the Chazzan say? Idle and foolish dreamer that I was, the Chazzan too. Cain, Cain, Cain! Adonai! El-Shaddai! Would that Shiloh were come!"

In front of the straining eyes of the half-wild shepherd came again and yet again, as in a kind of miniature, the sad procession of his solitary life. How lonely it had been he never before had realized. There he was as a child, with the little horses and dromedaries which the Mongrel had made for him out of clay; there again a tiny shepherd lad, attending a solitary, sad-mouthed sheep (which, also, the Mongrel had given him); there, just a little older grown, learning from the lips of the white-haired Chazzan, or gazing upon the little Amahnah; there, once more, sitting in the lonely, crowded synagogue, or following the heels of his father into the pastures; there, by a mighty rock, tearing apart the first great wolf that ever he had laid

his hands upon—and so he had been permitted by Trivialis to take in charge a whole great flock. Then the captivity in the South, the return under Betah, the crook again and the flocks. Ah! the solitude and the loneliness amongst those ever-bleating, ever-dependent sheep! Yet in that loneliness and solitude he had come to a knowledge of Adonai such as, else, had been denied to him forever. Then the worshipping of the hawk, the murder, the sudden flight, the tomb! Here—

He believed that the dim, sweet terrors of his youthful religion were things long gone and forever irrevocable.

"Adonai!"

He felt his stupid, fumbling way about the cold, clammy, unyielding death-chamber, with its insupportable darknesses; its whispering silences; its rude, imperious conceptions of the recently living, but now long-vanished dead, till his soul was filled with the raging immanence of impending disaster, eternal sheol—damnation.

"Adonai!"

A horror of life came over him and a deep sleep, and, as he slept, he murmured: "I am Cain!"

But the Lord appeared in a dream, and said unto the boy: "Samson, Samson!" And the boy said, "All unworthy, here am I." And the Lord said, "Be not wholly downcast. Thou shalt serve me as a lofty statue, for I know thy toughness and thy strength. And behold I will chisel thee twice, the first time roughly and the second exceeding fine. And when I have no further need of thee, I will break thee—and yet keep thee."

Then awoke the boy, and the hair was standing on his head and his knees were as water.

And in his heart was a feeling of mingled responsibility and joy. He heard, at a little distance, the sound of bells and of manly voices singing. He looked from the door of the tomb, and behold! a light was falling on the way.

BOOK II. THE FAILURE

CHAPTER III

The Man of Worldly Light

After the Jew had left him, Trivialis lay for a long time in a deep sleep. Then, by slow degrees, he arose, and, feeling of his noggin, whispered feebly: "I am fain to laugh: The goose hath laid an egg in the hare's nest."

After a little he declared, in a somewhat stronger tone: "I was truly a fool to anger such a giant, and he a fool also. Aha! What say the Sopherim? Alas! poor Shem, do I mock thee! Well, I will carry out thy plan of revenge, even as I did promise thee. Yonder go lights from the city to the desert—even past thy tomb, O Shem, my benefactor. Now I wish I had taken thy advice. It groweth dark. But wait a little, O Master that did free me. Poor am I at the execution of mine own designs, yet, where it doth concern the plan and purpose of another— Oh thou shalt see, my Master. I am fain to laugh, but now for Rhodes!"

He gathered up his traveller's cloak, his bulging bulga, and his little oaken staff, and set off in the way of Cyrene.

And he passed to the side of Cyrene and went the rock-cut roads to Apollonia, the seaport, being fully minded to carry out the plan which his Master had given him, and which should take him to Rhodes.

He passed along the Apollonian dock, whereby his ship lay at anchor, and then, when he had gone upon the ship, and come out again, and talked to many people, he said to himself: "I will purchase a goodly store of figs, for these be excellent eating out at sea." But, coming before the torch-lit place where the figs were exposed to sale, he thought suddenly that he saw the form of Samson, the revenger who had sought his life that day.

He also beheld that his ship was weighing anchor. Therefore he rushed speedily up the plank and into the ship, crying: "I am fain to laugh anyhow."

And he went down into the belly of the ship, where the place was on which he was to sleep.

For many long hours he came not forth again on deck, but lay

listening to the waves against the planks, being both sore and weary and much afeard of Samson.

After a certain time, lulled by the rubbing of the waves and the languorous, soft droning of the hortator's voice and his muffled hammerings, he became drowsy and yet more drowsy still. At length he both slumbered and slept.

And the Lord appeared unto him in a dream.

The Lord said, "Trivialis!"

Trivialis answered and said unto Him, "Jehovah, O Jehovah! Here am I."

The Lord said yet again, "Trivialis!"

And Trivialis once more answered the Lord, saying: "Jehovah, here am I."

The Lord said, "Trivialis, the thing which thou wouldst do is abhorrent unto me. Yet I will not mightily hinder thee that thou shalt attain thy purpose in it, for Hostilis is also abhorrent unto me.

"But behold! the levity of thy heart is clearly seen by me, so that thou canst not in any wise be unto me as a priest (after the manner of Samson, which is also Solomon, of Cyrene) nor yet as a graven monument in the stead of a priest. But I will shape thee after all, and will use thee for an end. And when I have finished with thee, I will break thee and yet keep thee."

And the man arose, and looked about and laughed, and swore that, even as he had begun, so onward would he go. "Am I a man to return upon my purpose, and that for the sake of a dream? And how can anyone be broken and yet kept?"

He also said, "When I have well eaten, I will mount to the deck, and see if the night be."

He mounted, and saw that the sun stood an hour above the horizon.

And he looked again and beheld that only a few of them which journeyed were still upon deck. Among these was not Samson. But there was one there, which had a rubicund nose, a gleaming eye, and a high restless manner. Said the lonely Trivialis, "Aha!"

He went therefore to a mast, lying down hard by the side of it. And having so lain for a time, with his eyes, as it seemed to them that passed him, tightly closed (but all the time they were sharply watching), he arose again, as the man with the rubicund nose and restless manner was about to pass the place.

He went up to that man and said to him, "Just now, sleeping, I dreamed a dream." For he feigned that, sleeping, he dreamed, that so he might the more easily begin an acquaintance with this man.

"What else wouldst thou dream than a dream, fool?" cried the man.

And Trivialis, when the man did cry him fool, was well pleased. For he said in his heart: "The man is a good companion, else had he called me not fool." Said he unto the fellow, "Thy name?"

"Dissolutio."

"A pleasant enough name. Mine is Trivialis."

"That is even better, for, if thou live up to thy name, thou hast an acquaintance, beyond doubt, with foolish little nothings like these."

He took from his traveller's bulga a number of dice, laid them on the deck. The twain sat down.

"What are those?" saith Trivialis, feigning not to know.

"Those," said Dissolutio, "be bits of bone called dice." And he proceeded to explain the manner of that olden game, how, for ensample, one, or, rather, two (for the playing solitary is as tedious as being on ship without company) can shake the "tesserae" (as he named the bones) in a hat, and then, upsetting the hat on the deck, removeth the hat. "*So.* Is it not very simple?"

"It is simple—perhaps too simple, for I understand it not." He smiled very wide like the fool which he both was and pretended to be.

"Then," quoth Dissolutio, "the faces that look to the deck (and not to the sky) are counted. And behold, they are counted in this manner: one, three, four, and six. The 'one' hath ever a second name—the 'dog.' There be neither 'two' nor 'five' at all. The lowest throw which thou canst throw—or any man whatever—is four dogs. The highest is called 'Venus,' not that that is the highest sum of the pips which any man can throw. By no means. But the numbers that are thrown of a Venus are all of them different. The sum of the numbers thrown be fourteen only, yet the throw, O mighty gods—"

"I see," brake in Trivialis. "Thou art an aleator—which, being interpreted, meaneth a gamester. That is very wrong of thee, and I doubt whether I ought, being freeman and no slave, to accompany thee in gaming. For behold, the laws of Augustus Cæsar are much against this matter. Throughout his empire all who gamble are condemned to a payment of four times the sum that was laid in issue. Besides—"

"Besides nothing. I am not aleator, thou stinking goat, but a man that would merely pass time jauntily. I play not for money but for pleasure alone. For, mark you, Senator Trivialis, pleasure is the only thing of actual estimation in all this world to me. Thou

seest," he continued, beginning to caress the dice slowly back into his dirty bulga again, "thou seest that I am, as they say, a philosopher and of the hedonic school. Now, according to the doctrines of that school, there is one great, underlying principle, wherefrom there grow, as a secondary consequence, a vast number of minor principles, or corollaries. Thus, first and greatest of these minor principles—"

"Let me see the bones," brake in Trivialis. "I have not heard of them before, and have much curiosity concerning them. Besides, I might be induced to play with thee, if me liked the looks of the cunning little things. Not for money, O excellent Dissolutio. Not any more than thou, O honestest man, would I play—and no doubt lose to thee besides—who, I mistrust, art very skilful at thine own game. But, if the voyage come to be too monotonous, as more than likely it shall do, then, perchance—I say—it is possible—I might—merely as a matter of innocent pastime thou understandest and friendship for thee—because my master—my former master—he hath always taught me, said he: 'Ever beware of gaming, my son, beware of gaming. What say the Sopherim?' "

"Ho hum! I must find a gayer companion." Dissolutio started up.

Thereupon Trivialis also sadly arose. But he followeth Dissolutio—even as Dissolutio had known that a man like him would do.

Trivialis saith unto Dissolutio, "Teach me the game, and I will seek to amuse thee. But not for money will I play—unless indeed thou canst give me money for a gem which I have about my neck."

"Come," responded Dissolutio, as he looked upon the jewel with eyes brighter than the stone itself. "Come into the shadow of the longest sail. And while the sail doth strain, and the hortator's voice and dull hammerings arise like sounds of many idle hives of bees, we shall have a game, a very divine game!"

. . . . Now, meanwhile, Samson-Solomon of Cyrene stood within the tomb, the bars whereof he had broken, and listened to the songs and the bells of the caravan, while the light came ever brighter and brighter down the way.

For a moment the sounds ceased, and the light itself was turned to shadow.

But a twinkling later, there brake into view, round the corner of a rock, the leader of the caravan—a mighty, straight-nosed, sunny-headed Greek seated on a white, upstepping horse.

In his hand he held high a torch, which lighted the road.

And now he started again to lead the singing. His voice was

clearer and richer than the liltings of many birds, as he sang with a royal happiness—

"Thy living light, Apollo, shines:
I love thy light, thy life."

And Samson-Solomon was quickly and mysteriously drawn toward the radiant man that was singing and bearing the high torch. So, as the Greek drew anigh, he ran straight out of the tomb, meaning to place one hand on the horse's neck, and so to walk by the side of the light-bearer. But behold! as he ran, he slipped (in his great eagerness) and nearly fell beneath the horse. Yet, leaning on his shepherd's crook, he arose again, and, passing quickly round the horse's head, did lay at last his hand upon the steed's neck, saying unto the torch-bearer: "Wilt thou not give me succor, O my friend!"

"By the bright rays of Helios, a Jew!" exclaimed the Greek. "Yea, I will succor thee, Friend; but how wilt thou be succored?"

"Merely by thy permission to go beside thee." Then he whispered, "For my heart is low and weak."

"Who art thou?"

"Samson of Cyrene. I am called also Solomon."

"Thou speakest the one world-language—Greek, yet after the fashion of the Cyrenaicans. Thou art a shepherd?"

"It is true." Samson cast his crook away with a sigh.

"Thine age?"

"Fourteen."

"Out of whose tomb camest thou?"

"My father's."

Now, for a time, the two kept looking, each upon the other, as they went the way of the desert. And the Greek beheld a giant even more beautiful than he had at first thought. He was clad in the usual apparel of a shepherd—a sheepskin cloak and leathern pileus, yet he strode with a grave and royal dignity. So tall he was that he reached not up but down to the withers of the Thracian steed. Somewhat flat of chest he seemed, but the sleeve of his cloak, drawn back nearly to the shoulder, let the Greek behold an arm likely to win the prize either at wrestling or at the throwing of a discus—or a bull. And the long, supple hand, with its tapering, ever closing and unclosing fingers seemed ready (so thought the Greek) for a mallet and chisel. But what did mostly please the soldier in the man of Athens was the dark, quick, melancholy, thoughtful countenance—the night-like eyes with stars of glorious passion a-gleam in

them. "I am not fain," thought the soldier, "to be an object of this man's fury."

And Samson of Cyrene, on his part, saw, astride upon the horse, a fair-skinned, rosy-tinted exquisite, both delicate and strong and noble and proud and likewise very easy in his carriage. He was dressed in a traveller's cloak of finest camel's hair, but wore no hat whatever. The full-arched chest, the straight, well rounded limbs, the splendid balance of the head, declared the birth and training of an athlete. All his hair was bright as the gold of any sunset, and his eyes (as now the Jew saw) were like the blue of the sky in the springing of the year. The thoughtful brow ran down to the quivering nose in one unbroken vertical line. The lips were always smiling, and Samson-Solomon thought that so they must ever appear even in the midst of angry threatenings and combat.

At length the Greek, laughing softly, leaned over and said in a hoarse whisper: "Where didst thou kill him?"

"In my father's most distant pasture. We do go beside the spot this moment. How didst thou know?"

"There is blood upon thy hand, repentance and Hades in thine eyes. Thou hadst thy reasons: fear not."

"I had them. But I am Cain, Cain, Cain."

"Who, prithee, was Cain?"

"The first of murderers."

"Then by the muscles of Hercules, thou art not Cain. Why, I myself have killed a thousand. Before thou sawest the light of Helios, I did surely kill them."

"Men?"

"Men."

"Thou? A thousand men—killed them?"

"Assuredly. It is not so great a number.—How smoky the torch burns!—Not quite that many have I killed directly, but directly and in other manners—ah well, let us say a thousand. Hast thou hid the body?"

"No."

" 'Tis well."

Now Samson pondered in his heart the words, " 'Tis well." At length he said, "Why sayest thou it is well that I hid not the body?"

"Because, as the body was not hidden, then am I—and I alone—the murderer."

"Thou!"

"Assuredly. I hide no bodies. I will send details unto Cæsar.

Fear not. Thou art innocent. I had good reasons why I killed the man."

The two went on in silence, behind them all the caravan, made up of many men of many nations. Songs came forward from these men, songs in a Babel of languages.

Said the Greek, "I must know what manner of man it was thou didst kill."

Samson, beholding him in the eye, declareth: "A mongrel. A man compact of many nations. He was not of any blood, and yet was of all bloods—saving and excepting mine and thine and the Roman. He was neither tall nor short, but yet, in the moments when I loved him, he seemed to be small to me, but if ever he did anger me (as oft he truly did) then he looked big enough to fight—tall enough for me to reach down—"

"By the terrors of life itself!—but thou wilt break my steed's neck! The lion's paw! By Hercules— Be not of gestures quite so eloquent."

"His eyes were gray, or else a lightish azure," went on the Jew. "There was not any depth at all in them, nor very much melancholy, nor much intrigue or calculation. They were easily rendered afraid—those eyes—were sometimes soft and dreamy, but oftener full of light and causeless laughter and eternal changes which amounted to nothing; and his mouth was large and weak and full of mockery and strange levitous hinnying cachinnations."

The Greek laughed long and loud. "I killed him," said he. "I have killed a thousand like him, also. I know him. He is everywhere—a man like that. You have to kill many such, or they get too numerous."

When Samson-Solomon had had a little time in which to think, he said unto the Greek: "See! I have trusted thine honor. Trust thou therefore mine, and tell me who thou art."

"My name is Lampadephorus. I am a traveller. I have been a soldier, sea captain, sculptor and musician, a gladiator and a merchant. My home is at Athens. I am very much at Rome. Yet I am wholly a Greek. I am also wholly thy friend."

"I knew it," said the Jew. "Or ever thou didst behold me—wouldst thou believe it?—I would be as a friend to thee also."

"Hast thou any other?"

"Adonai."

"Who, then, is Adonai?"

"I had rather," said Samson, after a time, "play unto thee on my

harp." For he thought, "This man, being not a son of Abraham, cannot in anywise comprehend Adonai."

So he took from his bosom the harp which he himself had made, and, touching the shorter of the strings, sang of the great pastures and the melancholy cries of innumerable sheep, and of all the longings that come into the soul of a lonely shepherd. And Samson of Cyrene saw that the eyes of Lampadephorus were wet. So he relented a little and thought, "I will at least sing (if not speak) unto thee about Adonai." And he sang full many a psalm, ending each with the joyful cry: "Adonai, Adonai, Adonai!"

He handed, then, the harp unto Lampadephorus without a word.

The Greek was touched that the boy had discovered without questioning that he, even Lampadephorus of Athens, should know the art of touching music from a lyre. When the man could speak, he sang, and all the singing of the caravan ceased, and even the footfalls of the horses appeared to become more nearly silent, that the music might ascend, as it were unimpeded, into heaven.

Then were the eyes of Samson-Solomon wet in their turn. He said, "I knew not, truly, that such sweet sounds could be."

And Lampadephorus of Athens did teach the Jew full many things about the harp, as, to wit, the making thereof and the proper tuning of the strings, and eke the pleasantest chords and happiest sequences. He came to the scales. "What," said he, even as Plato had said before him, "are the scales of mourning? The Myxolydian and High Lydian, and some others of the same character. Which, then, of the scales are soft and convivial? The Ionian and Lydian—such as are called 'slack.'" And he spake still further unto him of certain other scales, such as the vehement Phrygian (fond of trumpets and other military instruments) and the Hypophrygian, the Dorian (grave and severe) and the Hypodorian, likewise the Hypolydian (good for funerals) and some others, and the way that each did play upon the feelings of the hearers—but each of the modes, in its own sweet way (he said) was golden.

He taught the Jew, further, that the sweetest thing that ever yet was known concerning any melody (be it in Phrygian or Aeolian, or what not that is beautiful) is the blessed referring of each and every note unto its central master tone—the mesec, or tonic.

Then said Samson-Solomon, "That note is indeed like unto Adonai, the Lord God of all the Universe, to whom the universe of things refers itself in a sweet subjection, in whom indeed they may solely be said to have their cause of being. When a soul doth not refer itself unto Adonai, and agree therewith, that is sin. Yes, it is sin."

The Greek said unto him, "*What* is sin? Be thou clear. And who (as I have already asked thee) is this Adonai?"

Then remembered Samson that, in his dream, he was to be a monument unto the world, and he said: "Very well. I will tell thee of Adonai and of sin. But first I would have thee tell me more precisely as to who thou art, for thou hast told me not much."

And at this there came from the backward portions of the caravan a number of noisy men, who passed the Greek and the Jew, singing, for the most part, of a certain king that had fallen because of his very strength. And some of the riders, who had just taken torches up, lighted their lights at the Greek's, and went on far ahead into the sad, mysterious reaches of the infinite-seeming desert, still singing. And some of the roysterers laughed at the song, while others (but not many) were high sorrowful.

Then the Greek frowned for a moment, thinking of the words of Samson. But he again smiled, and said: "It is well enough: I will tell thee. I am not wholly Greek—though many do not know that. I have both Babylonian and Egyptian blood within me. A certain Cecrops was mine ancestor. He, an Egyptian, yet with a Babylonian father, came into Hellas many aeons since, founding there Cecropia, which was afterwards made the citadel of Athens. Also the Phrygian Pelops is one of mine ancestors: progenitor he both of Agamemnon and of Menelaus. He settled in the South, and after him was named the Peloponnesus, isle of Pelops. My mother was a Doris—not much poetry or music about her, but a woman very practical. Ah, she could manage! My father was Ionicus, a many-sided and imaginative man. How well I remember him—beautiful as the morning: a poet, a philosopher, a musician. Some people say that I sing a little like him. I am, at all events, a mixture of my mother and my father. The two do struggle in me, the poet and the merchant-manager. For the rest: I have stood upon the sand before great Cæsar. I have struggled with all the world but Cæsar."

"And why," said Solomon, "hast thou not struggled with Cæsar also?"

At this the Greek was silent for a time. Then said he, "Because it is useless and unbeautiful to struggle against the Lord of All This World. Let us adjust ourselves to indomitable powers, making sweet harmonies with them. There was once a teacher, named Pe-Lesetau—"

"Pe-Lesetau!"

"Pe-Lesetau. Knowest thou him?"

"I knew him whenas I was a captive in the Great Oasis of the

South. Little I learned from that man, for, in his time, I was, in his country (as I have already said to thee) a poor captive, alone. He is very aged, Pe-Lesetau."

"Very aged, and also (for any but little children) very useless as a teacher. So he was, even in his prime. Rightly is he named Pe-Lesetau—The-Gate-of-the-Passage. He is only for beginners: his knowledge, though exact, is small in quantity."

"But thine," said Samson of Cyrene, "is very great. Even as was Pe-Lesetau, so art thou named truly, for thou art 'The Bearer of the Light.'"

The Athenian looked the Jew in his dark, earnest eyes with much steadfastness, and seeing there but love and reverence, he said: "I am greatly beholden unto thee, O Jew. But more I should be thy debtor wouldst thou explain unto me now what sin is, also who is Adonai."

Then said Samson, "I will do this thing, for I had a dream last night—believest thou in dreams?"

"Yea. There are some dreams that are wholly supernatural, if others that are naught. Yet in any dream at all the feelings and the thoughts of the present hours are ofttimes suppressed. Then riddle-like shadows, the deep symbols of the future, go stealing through the chambers of the soul, preparing, warning, comforting, or as it sometimes happeneth, merely deceiving. Dreams are much like other folk, so, though they sometimes lie, they oftener tell truth."

"But Adonai lieth not," said the Jew. "Oh Adonai, Adonai, Adonai! Thou spakest to me last night as I lay in my father's tomb. Thou saidest, 'Be not wholly downcast, Solomon. Thou shalt serve me as a lofty statue, for I know thy toughness and thy strength. And behold I will chisel thee twice, the first time roughly and the second exceeding fine. And when I have no further need of thee, I will break thee—and yet keep thee.'"

"Said that some god?"

"It was the only God—Adonai."

Now the Greek looked up, raising his beautiful eyebrows.

"I love Adonai," said the Jew.

"Thou lovest him—a god!"

"I love Him," said the Jew.

Now, at this, there came up furiously from the rear of the caravan a Roman soldier on a foaming red horse. And he cried, "Lampadephorus! Lord!" reining his steed so suddenly that the beast was nigh unto sitting backward in the sand.

Then gave the soldier unto Lampadephorus a little scroll. The

which, when the Greek had broken the seal, he read with feverish haste. Said he unto the soldier, "Tell thy Master there is not now any word for him.—What is new at Apollonia?"

"Naught, I believe, O Lampadephorus," said the soldier, "except that the Sirius from Sardinia hath arrived in port, while the Poseidon cleared for Lindus and other harbors in Rhodes, and the old Megasthenes for Alexandria. On the latter was a man with a gaping wound in his temple, for one in a pasture near Cyrene had thought to murder him."

"The wounded man's name?"

"I know not. But the giver of the blow was called—was called—"

Now the heart of Samson rose into his mouth.

"His name was called," replied the soldier, "Oh! Samson-Solomon, of Cyrene."

"Thou liest," cried the Greek. "*I* gave that blow. And so shall I do to thee also, so be thou dost report it otherwise. Tell it to thy captain." Then, in a milder tone: "I pray thee, in this matter haste."

The horseman sped back into the darkness, while Lampadephorus re-read his tiny scroll, and yet again re-read it, and was very grave and strait of countenance.

But the heart of the Jew was filled with a glorious thanksgiving unto Adonai, because the blow which he had stricken on the temple of Trivialis had not been mortal. He cried out in his soul, after David:

"Hallelujah!
Praise God in His sanctuary,
Praise Him in the firmament of His strength,
Praise Him with psaltery and harp,
Praise Him with timbrel and dance,
Praise Him with clear-sounding cymbals,
Praise Him with deep-toned cymbals.
Hallelujah."

Then said he unto Lampadephorus, "I am going home."

"Thou?"

"Yea."

"And when?"

"Now—this moment." He did address himself as though he would return to Cyrene.

"The lions and the leopards! Thy bones! The vultures!"

"No matter, I must be about my father's business. There are many sheep."

Then took Lampadephorus the hand of the boy within his own, and he said: "Trivialis is not dead, as thou didst hear. Wilt thou suffer that he shall escape thee wholly? For see! He hath gone unto Alexandria. And there he will be safe if thou follow him not. But go thou with me unto Crocodilopolis (for thither I do go) and later thou mayest on to Alexandria, there to take thee thy revenge."

But Samson said unto him, "I *must* return. Yet will I go a little distance further upon thy way with thee, for I am loath to separate from thee. And all the more for this, that thou art very sad since the soldier that was on the horse did give thee a little scroll and thou didst read it. Nay, shake not thy head. I read thee as easily as thou didst read the scroll."

Said then Lampadephorus, "Fear nothing. I am a servant of Caesar, and all that do serve the Prince of the World must be at times sad. And if, on a day, I perish— See! my life it hath been very beautiful, and I have greatly rejoiced in it."

And Samson of Cyrene did love the man even more than ever, for that he saw him in a trouble. He said to him, "I hate Cæsar for thy sake."

He went round unto the left of Lampadephorus, declaring: "I will walk beside thee on the left side only, for that is the side where thy heart is. And there will I walk beside thee all the way that I will walk with thee. Even as Abraham, my people's ancestor, was a friend unto Abimelech, and Naomi unto Ruth, and the High Priest at Jerusalem unto Alexander, so will I be a friend to thee."

The Greek was touched in his heart by the boy's devotion. He smiled up at him, saying: "Let us be friends, truly, and rejoice. For behold, the Greek and the Jew they are sojourners everywhere among foreigners (which be foes unto them) for evermore."

. . . . But Trivialis and his red-nose friend, Dissolutio, they twain sat in the shadow of a great sail, shaking dice and counting one another's money.

And Dissolutio looked in the way in which they were going, and saith then unto his haggard companion: "Behold! Yonder is Rhodes. We shall soon drive into the harbor." And he sent for yet more wine, saying: "Or ere we part, O noble companion, I would drink thy name"—which is the same as to say "drink as many cups as thy name containeth letters."

Trivialis saith unto him, "It is well enough. For who is there that is like unto us for profitable entertainment, inasmuch as, gaming the several weeks away, we have quit, each, with even as many drachmae as he started withal, neither one farthing less nor yet one

farthing more?—But thou hast indeed the stone which I received from my master, Shem."

And when he, in company with Dissolutio, had drunken as many cups as there were letters in his name, then said he: "Now we will drink thine own name also, O most excellent Dissolutio, for that is but fair and well-balanced."

And when both of the names had thus been thoroughly drunken, they twain fell upon each other's necks and vowed eternal fidelity, and promised to remember each the other, though the wide seas them parted.

But, being got upon the quay, they fell on each other's necks again, and again vowed friendship, and again and yet again, till at length the one said unto the other: "Why, when we be such friends, should we part at all? Let us go our ways together, and make them twain but one."

So they agreed they would do this.

And they went and took up their inn at a place of mere rioting, which pretended to be a caupona. Here they slept for an hour, the twain in one cubiculum.

Then went they back to the common room, where a great crowd was that much desired to play with any comers.

And here, when he had drunk his fill, it came into the mind of Trivialis (and was probably put there by Satan) that he ought in all conscience to spread in this crowd a little of the knowledge of the one and only God, even Elohim, for that he, Trivialis, had had a certain advantage in matters of religion from his long acquaintance with Shem and with Samson-Solomon and also with the Chazzan, and even Amahnah, which is also Berith and Machashebethel.

And he called out, very maudlin, so that all arose that they should find out the matter. "Hearken," he cried. "And hearken, and hearken yet once again, O ye peoples of every nation, for I that was servant unto Ignorantia, but am now a free man, I do declare to you that which ye all should know, as namely, the knowledge of the one God, even Jehovah."

Some laughed, saying: "Whereof doth he speak?" Others also laughed, but yet understood. "He hath learned religion of a certain Shem, also of his son, a wisely-foolish Solomon, and now he would instruct us, his betters, believing us 'lost,' as he calleth it, because of 'sin.'" And there were those who said unto him (that they might make jests) "What think ye of idolatry?"

He began to say to them that which, truly, he did believe concerning idolatry, how that, for an ensample, it enslaveth and de-

gradeth all which follow it, and sinketh them deeper and yet more deep in sin.

At this they all, with one accord, laid hold of their drunken sides and laughed with great enjoyment, and yet with great scorn too.

Trivialis, when he saw this thing, pretendeth he had spoken only in jest. "Ye do take me seriously," he said. "Ye should not do so, for I but jested."

Thereupon they laughed the more, and arose and buffeted him sorely, crying: "Into the corner, and remain. For thou art neither boon companion nor yet true preacher."

After a time one that was in the crowd, but yet was not of it, being sober and of most excellent judgment, did wend his way around and about among the drunken companions, and lay hands heavily on Trivialis.

"Come thou with me," he commanded.

They twain went therefore outside the caupona.

And when they had got outside the circle which the torch cast of light as it stood aslant over the doorway, then said the sober one to Trivialis: "My name is Agonus, which, interpreted, meaneth 'Remorse.' For this, that I do love thee well, I prohibit that thou shouldst return unto Dissolutio and his brawling companions. Get thee away! Come!"

Then Trivialis, growing into a hot rage: "Thou sayest thou art called, plainly, Agonus, which, being interpreted, meaneth Remorse. Well then, my name, as I would have thee plainly understand, is Adespotus, which, interpreted, meaneth 'He that Hath No Master.' And, as my name, so am I. Away then, and get thee far from me. Else shall I kill thee."

But Remorse drew a great two-handed sword, and cried unto him: "Ere thou shalt kill me, I will even kill thee."

And, at this, Trivialis, for the half of a twinkling, was a mind to try conclusions with his adversary. But, looking the great antagonist over, he said in his heart: "Nay, he is much too big for me." So, outwardly, he said: "Let me only return to Dissolutio and get back the gem which my master gave me, but which Dissolutio hath defrauded me out of. I will rattle the dice with him till I have got me the gem back."

Said Agonus, "I will not suffer thee to go back, for, if thou goest back, then art thou thyself surely lost. And the stone which thou hast said was a symbol of youth and of promise and of opportunity, it is gone forever, that I do know. Draw, therefore, O foolish man, and let us have this battle out."

Now Agonus loomed so lusty, and his sword so long, so keen, and so glittering bright, that Trivialis turned, and, gathering his feet together, fled, like the coward he was, quickly away—and Remorse close after him.

He fled for many hours, both in the city and in the country. For neither would he come to a fight direct with Remorse, nor yet, upon the other hand, did he dare go back to his sometime friend, Dissolutio —though much he wished he might do this.

When the sun arose, then did Remorse cease following after Trivialis. And Trivialis did discover himself in the agora, which is to say the market place, of the great city.

And he busied himself with many things in the noisy and variegated market place, seeking forgetfulness, yet all the while yearning as before for his sometime friend and reveller, even Dissolutio.

CHAPTER IV

Light Divine

So Samson-Solomon of Cyrene and Lampadephorus the Athenian sware eternal friendship and fidelity. Even as they marched across the lonely sands of Time, in the darkness of the worldly night, then sware they eternal friendship each unto each. And Samson-Solomon at length said, "I will go with thee, Lampadephorus, even as far as Crocodilopolis, that wonderful city of which I have heard."

Now there came for the Jew, long afterward, a day when all these things were a part of a hated and irreparable past—a time of wildest wishes and vainest and most forlorn regrets, of bitter tears, of terrible repentance. And of a sudden the boy even now beheld, as often he had known himself to do before—for prophecy was of his nature—a futurizing vision, wherein there flowed between him and his friend a river of blood. And the Greek (that that was in the vision) cried: "Thou hast shed, O friend, my blood." And the boy saw yet again a vision, and behold! once more a river as it were of blood. And the friend, which was the Greek, again cried out, saying: "This time thou hast instead preserved my blood." And yet a third time did the Jew behold a vision. And again the Greek cried out across the crimson current, "This blood, it is owing to Cæsar. I am wholly Cæsar's. Try not. Thou canst not in any wise succor me."

And behold, the Greek was in fact saying unto him: "I am wholly Cæsar's."

Then said Samson, "I—am wholly Adonai's. Yet I love also thee."

The Greek said, "Thou didst say aforetime thou didst love Adonai, the one and only God."

Said the Jew, "And I promised thee I would tell thee of Him. As I said, so I will do, for I am to be a monument unto the Almighty."

Once again the Jew could hear, from far ahead in the starlit desert, the words of the song of the men of many nations—

"There was once a glorious king
Who fell by reason of his strength."

And once again the soul of the Jew was filled with unutterable sadness, and he remembered the allegories which he had used to make, or else to recall, in the sheepfields, as the caravans went by. And now, more than ever, it seemed to him that the night and the angling caravan and the hills and precipices which passed them by in the darkness, were all like the journey which a soul doth make from its cradle to the grave, both in mystery and in darkness, and also beset by harrowing dangers.

And Samson drew up closer to the Greek, that he might not step off into the dangerous places. And these were the words of Solomon, or Samson, of Cyrene, son of Shem ben-Noah ben-Adam, as he spake unto Lampadephorus, the sunny headed Greek: "Adonai! When I do think of Adonai, I am like to faint. And truly His splendors are ever within me like to a veritable Sheckinah. Even when I struck my father's steward, I was thinking of Adonai. For Him it was I struck, with howsoever much of unwisdom.

"Seest thou these stars? Adonai made them. They are not gods, as the heathen ofttimes declare: they are merely creatures of Adonai. These sands we travel on, they are creatures of Adonai. And the caravan itself—thou, I, every human being—we were shapen by His hands. Space and time, too, as I have heard the rabbis tell, they were made by Adonai. The first was spread out by His fingers, and then He set His other creatures into it, and all alike were started on that strange and inexplicable journey which we call time. It beginneth, for each and every person, at the cradle, it endeth, for each and every person, at the tomb."

"Aristotle," said the Greek, "hath declared that time is unlimited, both time and space, also the atoms and the moments that do fill them up. The world hath existed always, saith that great philosopher, and always will continue to be."

"That is a mistake," said the Jew, with positiveness. "In the

beginning was God. Before Him and beside Him there was nothing. He spake, and things were."

Then told the Jew of the making of Adam, thenafter Eve. Then of the Serpent, which is Satan, the vile one who wished to be God's rival. "Now knowest thou what sin is. It is when we do the things that please God's adversary, not God."

"And then you buy your peace."

"How buy peace with Adonai?"

"A cake, a libation poured on the ground, a sheep slaughtered, at the most a hecatomb."

"These things are only symbols," said the Jew. "A humble and repentant heart alone will reconcile us with Adonai. But the symbols are useful, for they make us understand and remember."

"By the white flesh of Aphrodite!" cried Lampadephorus. "Thou hast a peculiar religion. We Greeks and Romans reconcile ourselves with Venus (for one ensample) by staying for a time with her prostitutes. Hast thou heard of Petra?"

"Yea, they do slaughter and bury an innocent child there, to propitiate Dusares. Who would have so foul a god? But my God is pure. He is truly El-Shaddai, and He needeth not to be impure—nor would be. But all these other gods are merely angels of the Devil, him that brought sin into the world."

"Thy proof?"

"Ye do propitiate such gods for sin with further sin. How know any man, or god or devil, save by the works which he doeth?"

"My gods are very beautiful," said Lampadephorus. "Enough. One religion is just as good as another, if only it be beautiful. As for repentance— Now the religion of the Romans is by no means beautiful. Those people care about the gods merely for what can be got out of them. To the Greeks, the Olympians are first and foremost for a worship; to the Romans, for divination, augury, the furtherance of their own plans and ambitions. The Egyptians see the immortals in the shapes of repellant beasts; we Greeks, however, in the matchless forms of men and women."

"And Jews?"

"Ye Jews behold them not at all. Ye have but one God, and He hath the shape of water, which is nothing. Ye do worship nothing, for form is everything."

"But Messiah will come. He will come in a shape that all the world, rejoicing—"

But by now the caravan had stopped within an excellent space,

and a fire was started with the dry dung of horses, for night in the desert is chill.

And when all had been refreshed, but were yet awhile resting before they went again upon their way, Samson-Solomon of Cyrenaica did speak his heart out freely to the Greek again. And he saw from time to time that the men of many nations were listening; yet he thought, "Shall I be like Jonah?" and failed not further to speak to them, relating the story both of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob and Joseph and his brethren, and of the stay in idolatrous Egypt, the exodus from thence beneath the guiding hand of great Moses, the entrance (after many wanderings) into the Promised Land, the Judges, the Kingdom, the continued idolatries, and, at last, the subjugation and the carrying away into Captivity—since which fearful experience (that had been unto them like a schoolmaster) his people had been devoid of all idolatries.

Then he spake about the Messiah, and of what His long-expected coming would mean for the whole world—especially the lowly and humble of heart.

"Speakest thou against Cæsar?" cried some that stood nigh, and began to threaten him.

He only said, "I speak truth. Is it against Cæsar?" For a time, they were silenced.

But when, afterwards, the Greek spake, he said nothing concerning Cæsar, and only that the teachings of the Jew were, as to his own mind, not logical enough, and not sufficiently filled with matters of this world and of gaiety and physical joy. Especially he could not understand "sin." But some that had stood by, listening (among them a very humble one, Sincerus) carried away in their hearts both the fear of sin and the knowledge and love of the Lord. As for Sincerus, he, on a later day, became a proselyte unto righteousness. And going into many places, he taught that salvation is of the Jews, and brought many others also unto God, until at length, Jehovah, who long had loved him and supported him in fleshly tribulations, reached forth and took him home.

But (at the present hour) others waxed wroth, some made the ciconia at the preacher, and all did take to their horses, and the caravan went on, Jew beside Greek, till the red morning arose with its glare and intolerable ardor, and the caravan halted, and the servants set up the smaller and the larger tents, and some of the travellers refreshed themselves once more, but all (excepting the watchers of the camp) did lay themselves down into slumbers.

And Samson slept in the tent of Lampadephorus, though, as he

laughed, he said: "It were better that Japhet slept in the tents of Shem." When he had explained to Lampadephorus, the latter fell silent.

CHAPTER V

The Struggles of the Priest

The weeks had gone by like a weaver's shuttle, for, from desert stop to desert stop, the Greek Lampadephorus (he with the Oriental tincture in his veins) had been as a brilliant schoolmaster unto the Jew. Even as Pharaoh had instructed Moses, and the great Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon had taught the Jewish captives, and the wiser and greater Alexander had taught them in the Greek-Egyptian city of Alexandria, and, after that mightiest teacher, then also Ptolemy Philadelphus and Ptolemy Soter—all by direction or by indirection, with the learning of old priests and of Aristotle and of Plato, and of Euclid and eke of many others like unto them—bearers of the light. Little could Samson-Solomon do with Lampadephorus's instructions about sculpture, architecture, or painting, and when one day, at an oasis, he was handed by Lampadephorus a wooden carving of Apollo (whereon the Greek had labored but a golden hour) and was asked by his master to make the like upon another piece, behold his Jewish fingers failed him utterly. Nor, as the friends stood before the glorious paintings in an oasian temple, could the Jewish eye discern of color to the full satisfaction of the artist. Moreover, the Jew was afeard of idol images. But, when the sunny-headed Greek made wonderful songs, or delicately discoursed on cooing flute or twangling lyre, then the pupil did wholly surpass his shining master—who thereupon would tell the scholar as much. Also, in the matter of philosophy the boy went farther than his teacher. "I have an advantage of thee," he would shout, "O Lampadephorus, in that Adonai hath given me a rightness at the very beginnings of these things."

And Lampadephorus taught Samson-Solomon often by subtle allegories, such as "The Picture," by Kebes, and that about Persephone and Demeter, and Chronos (who is simply "Time") and eke many another, in which the story was single indeed but the meaning complex, and often not to be understood in its entirety by any one man. "Like a stone which standeth in the desert of a morning, so these tales cast shadows which are longer than themselves." So said Lampadephorus. And the Jew made allegories on his own account, turning (as the cliffs and abysses passed them by in the solemn darkness) his

own dear scriptures into tales of two-fold (sometimes of treble) meaning—so as to approximate the ultimate purport of those scriptures unto the significance of the tales which he had had from his sunny-headed teacher, Lampadephorus.

And yet again the two went silent, side by side, each with his own-made dreams. And ever the Jew did see himself (in whatsoever dreams he had) as burdened and weighed upon by a great responsibility, the duty of his priesthood; but Lampadephorus, as he beheld the future in his visions, saw it as a thing of life and utter physical beauty, eating and drinking and pleasure—and all in moderation and very fitting and excellent. There was nothing of the spiritual about him, except the little he had caught from Samson. The thought of Cæsar, whenever it arose, the Greek strangled. There was yet another difference betwixt these two men. In the dreams of Samson-Solomon, the Jew himself was ever of the essence of the dream—his was the character which made the whole vision or unmade it, and all the other characters in the dream appeared unto the Jew to be as it were of a Jewish cast, for he thought his own mind into them. But, as for the Greek, he was merely a calm observer, seeing the minds of all the people in his dreams, as truly the minds of people are in plain reality: independent, each with its own soul-life.

And there were other and irreconcilable differences between Greek and Jew—incompatibilities which, slumbering, only awaited—like steel and flint—some external force to draw fire between them. Especially the Jew was like to be provocative of anger in the sunny-tempered Greek, because much less adaptive, much more resistant, not so capable of comprehending what might prove to be an occasion of offense.

And the Jew, on a day, was dreaming slowly of his priesthood—as he went along on foot beside the mounted Greek—of his priesthood in Jerusalem. He longed for his joyous turn at the smoking altar. He felt the very cleanness and the quiet of his sacerdotal functions, heard the bells on the high priest's garment, saw the rising incense, had the feeling of the Temple, the very stones, beneath his feet. He had almost touched, as he thought, Jehovah with his hands, when suddenly the Greek exclamied: "See yonder! the red star of war—grim Mars."

And the Jew, being startled, both by this and also by a dark shape which he saw in the desert, declared: "I care not," giving thus an offense unto the Greek, who, after a time, began to interrogate him, with a certain mockery: "Wilt thou stay for an oracle at Jupiter Ammon? Or wilt thou on to Crocodilopolis and Alexandria?"

"To Alexandria."

"But why? Thou hast only perfume in thy veins. Thou hast wholly forgotten the occasion of thy revenge against Trivialis."

Then felt Samson of Cyrene a deep loathing for the Greek. But he said to himself, "I will tell this man of all my feeling for Trivialis, for so it may lessen my friend's vexation toward me, for surely it will incline his heart unto forgiveness and so unto me."

But the Greek crieth out, "It is gone," and clapped his hand upon his girdle.

"What is gone, good Lampadephorus?"

"Nothing! A special purse I had at my girdle. Yet it was much too. I will even go back and look for it."

"And I," said the Jew, "will go and assist thee, for it very well may be that the beasts which follow a caravan will get thee; and I will not have it so."

But Lampadephorus would not suffer the Jew or any other to accompany him, though many offered—for the Greek had a manner like sunlight in the sky, and the company loved him.

So the Greek went back alone, and the Jew went on with the caravan, hanging, nevertheless, in its very end, and looking from time to time backward with much anxiety. Once he could have sworn he glimpsed a great shadowy figure on a tall black horse—while the charger of Lampadephorus was white and his cloak a golden brown. But a cloud of sand arose in that portion of the desert, trailing an enormous shadow, and the Jew, who saw not always properly at some distance, began to believe that his eyes and the shadow and the uncertain moonlight must, of a truth, have deceived him.

Presently, over a rise, came the sunny-headed Greek on his frost-white charger. He dangled in air a little silver purse, crying: "Eureka! Eureka! It is mine again. Rejoice, O Jew, with thy true friend."

But, in the Jew's mind had arisen doubts, and the boy thought that the finding of the purse was wholly and subtilly a ruse. Yet he only said, "I was to tell thee how the matters in my mind stood touching Trivialis." Then told he him of all the war that had waged in his heart because of the Mocker: how that man had carried him as a child, in his loyal arms, had made him cunning little camels and horses out of the red clay, and set them up for caravans, and made him his first little shepherd's crook. "And, therefore," said the Jew, "though I do truly hate Trivialis, yet I do love him also. Oh, what shall I do to gain me revenge upon him (a man I love as

well as hate) which shall not be worse for me than for that man? In any case, what a sorry priest am I!"

"A sorry priest! Art thou, then, a priest?"

"Have I not told thee? I am of the tribe of Levi, the family of Aaron, the course of Jedaiah, so that I am relative to the great high priest of Jerusalem. But behold! my genealogy (which was once in the archives of Jeshana) is wholly and forever lost, save only on a piece of parchment which is in a locket that I carry in my bosom—there and, as God may have it, on another that is in Jerusalem. If I shall ever get me unto Jerusalem, I shall be a priest, because of the parchment that is in this locket. There are also pearls therein, pearls that be priceless."

Now the Greek would see the locket—being of a nature inquisitive—but the Jew would not on any account disclose it to him or suffer him to touch it, saying: "There is none but the High Priest worthy." And at this the Greek was again angered, saying: "Thy high priest is a barbarian."

To calm him, the Jew (though an-angered himself) spake unto him about the glorious maiden Amahnah.

"And who is Amahnah, a Berber or a Hebrew wench?"

"She is Hebrew and very beautiful," replied the Cyrenian, a-tremble. "Her name doth signify 'the Covenant.' She is called also 'Berith,' which meaneth the same, and 'Leah,' which meaneth 'Labor,' and 'Keturah,' which signifieth 'a sweet odor,' and 'Machashebethel,' which meaneth 'the plan of God.' Though beautiful, she is yet at times severe. She is a child of God, and liveth with the Chazzan in the synagogue. Finally, thou hast called her wench. She is not as the harlot Aphrodite, a fine and unconscionable woman, protrectress of evil, she whom thou dost bow down before and worship."

Then cried the Greek, "Enough! By Hecate Triformis!"

"And all thy gods," said Samson of Cyrene, for his soul blazed hotter even as he kept on talking, "are much upon the order of thine Aphrodite, either adulterers, or thieves, or else—"

"By the light of the living sun! Barbarian! Thou callest thyself— Thy people are to teach the world, and thou to teach thy people! Dog! Cur! Bramble of an egotistical Jew and blasphemer against all things beautiful!"

"Thou art the blasphemer, good Lampadephorus!"

" 'Good' me not, sirrah, nor say thou unto me 'Lampadephorus,' but look thy last upon these stones, for I mean to assault thee and to kill thee where thou standest. Even as thou didst fail to destroy

the mocker of thine unbeautiful Adonai, so will I kill thee and fail not."

Now, all about the two had gathered the men of many nations—both Indus and Persa; Arabs and Aegyptius; Aethiops, Spartanus, and Britannus—as well as many others. And all the languages of the world were heard among these roaring men, who, for the most part, declared, either in one tongue or another: "Let us be against this Samson fellow of Cyrene, for he is a Jew and a sore hater of idolatry—as we have truly heard from his very lips—and lo! all the other races will worship one another's gods in addition to their own, but not so the Jew, and he and his kind would interrupt our pleasures forever, if only the power were in them, and would also destroy the idols and the temples of our gods. Let us therefore be against him, and see that he surely falls before the Greek, that he may breed no more that is like unto him. Away with him! See! The Greek hath drawn two swords."

But when the Jew beholdeth that all the world, as one might say, is arrayed against him, and that even his friend draweth not one single blade, but two, then his heart becometh like wax a-melted in the midst of his bowels, and he counteth all his bones, for lo! in the deeps of him, he feareth the cunning of the Greek and the great numbers of the multitude. Then he prayeth unto Jehovah, and there cometh to him the memory of much strength, and of a many wolves he hath slain, and the bars of iron his hands have twisted asunder. And his weakness departed, and he runneth to the pack-horse of the Greek and teareth from out the fardel both the great, stout tent-poles, and seeing at a little way a mighty rock with a slight recess therein, he attained unto it, crying: "Ebenezer![1] I am ready: be it as ye will."

And Lampadephorus (he that had been his friend) assaulted him, and Samson parried and returned greater blows, a-crying "At thee!"

"At *thee*. Parriest so?"

"Thou givest all the same, Idolater. Back!"

"Here is Greece."

"Here Judea."

"There is red in thy land."

"And in thine."

"With me, Hercules! Help!"

"He cannot help!"

"Help! Death! Hercules!"

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[1] Stone-of-Help.

And the raging crowd drew swords and clubs and rushed to the assistance of the Greek. But Samson, for a time, smote all as if they had had no weapons, and had stood but to drop at his pleasure. Then they grew more numerous. But never a man before had fought so enduringly. They compassed him around like bees, and a green mist thickened before him.

Then heard he, in the middle of that mist a strange yet friendly voice—the voice of Lampadephorus, the Greek—crying: "Nay, by all the gods, it shall not be. I love thee, Samson-Solomon of Cyrene, my friend."

And Solomon's head was next in the lap of the Greek, and the Greek did lave his temples both with water and with wine, and comforted him mightily, saying: "Never was such a dimachærus born as thou, O lovely Samson-Solomon. Knowest thou not, in this affray, we did exchange our weapons? So hath it happened. And where didst thou learn (a half-baked shepherd merely) the feint and the stroke that well-nigh sent me into Tartarus? Thou madest believe thou wouldst reach me on the head, but then didst come at my heart. By Friendship and Hercules! Nay, seek not to answer. Thy wounds are bounden, and now sleep."

CHAPTER VI

The Struggles of Trivialis

And Trivialis learned that Hostilis, the unfortunate man upon whom the Master, Shem, would have taken vengeance, had, on a long past day, got himself from out the island, and journeyed to far Athens, being in truth at the present moment a seller of oils and olives in that place and also high prosperous. Therefore said Trivialis, "I must follow, and set me up my shop beside him, and undersell him, and thereby ruin him, even as the Master told me he would that I should do."

Then remembered he the dream which he had had in the belly of the ship, when the Lord had spoken unto him, saying: "Trivialis, Trivialis!" And the man had answered and said unto Him, "Here, Lord, am I." And the Lord had said again unto him, "Trivialis!" And Trivialis had answered yet again, and said: "Jehovah, here am I." Then had the Lord said, "Trivialis, the thing which thou wouldst do is abhorrent unto me. Yet will I not mightily hinder thee from the end of the doing thereof.

"And behold! the levity of thy heart is known to me, so that

thou canst not be unto me as a priest, nor yet as a graven monument. And still I will shape thee and will use thee for a purpose all mine own. And when I have finished with thee, I will break thee and yet keep thee."

Then said Trivialis, "It is strange I had forgotten that dream till now. I am fain to laugh." And laugh he did, though without cause, even in such wise that Dissolutio, who chanced to be passing, overheard him, then saw him, and then marched swiftly up to him, crying, in an ecstasy: "Accursed be that fellow Agonus, which did set us apart."

But behold! Trivialis said not, "I am glad to see thee once more." But, instead: "Thou madest a gambler and a drunkard of me." And, with that, he rushed upon the fellow, and might indeed have slain him, but that Dissolutio, being a more than sufficient fighter, got him a strangle-hold on Trivialis's neck, the which (though Trivialis did break the hold indeed) so pained and terrified the craven that he would no more come to quarters with his enemy, but gathered his feet together and ran, and so became clear of him. And finally, onto a ship which shortly weighed anchor, and left for Piræus—which is to say, the sea-port of Athens, where Hostilis abode.

And having come to Athens, he sought out the man upon whom his master had wished to be revenged, and, having found him, prosperous and growing richer day by day, and about to be married, he set up beside him another shop of a character like his own. And there, because of the monies which his principal had made him the master of, Trivialis undersold the man, and his business was broken up, and the man, of a certain night, departed, and was seen no more.

Then said Trivialis, "Master, I have done thy wish. I have destroyed thine enemy and given thee revenge. Even as thy son, Samson, would have his revenge upon thy steward, so hath that steward gained thy revenge for thee, and for this, that thou wast mocked."

And he went each day and looked upon the empty shop of Hostilis, and thought on many things.

Each day he said within himself: "Behold, it is natural that every man should have a revenge. Did not even Cain this thing, and unto his own brother? But Hostilis was a good man, after all. Yet what so human as revenge, since all beasts cherish it? And why endeavor to root out that which is human? Yea thy choice for priest, O Jehovah, he hath also a revenge as against me, which he cherisheth, and which, on a day, he will take, to my destruction—or so I truly believe."

Then, being heavy of heart and sore afeard also, he betook him to an oracle near by, inquiring: "What shall be the fate of me, Trivialis?"

The prophetess answered, "He that hath tried to kill thee will surely see thee die."

The bowels of the man turned as it were to water and his knees smote, and he went back to his place of business, crying in his heart: "O Lord, I have sinned!"

And to all that came into the shop, therefore, he spake of Adonai, thinking so to propitiate the Lord. But much men scoffed, saying: "*Thou!* Thou a priest of *any* god! Why, thou art a man of business. Dost thou not understand that no man liveth which can be both a priest and a merchant? Pah!"

Trivialis grew bitter at heart, and he said within him: "This Samson-Solomon of Cyrene, I would wager a skin full of new wine that, turned he man of business, he yet should be Jehovah's priest, and not a little shopful of people only, but all the world, would listen to him.

"And who is this Samson of Cyrene? Is he not merely man? Larger he than I, yea and more enduring. But behold! he is very sad alway, and too earnest. But I—I am cheerful as a cricket in an early hedge. Thou shouldest have had a cheerful priest, O God. Yet, O Jehovah, thou hast preferred the Jew to me! He thy priest! Oh very well. I am sad enough now."

Then came into the shop one that said, "Thou art a pretty fellow."

"For why?" asked Trivialis.

"For this, that thou hast done a terrible thing, having destroyed the business of Hostilis. And now he hath cut his throat."

The messenger would have said more, but Trivialis, putting his fingers in his ears, ran away, crying (for at heart he was not all bad) "Would I had not done this thing! Oh, would to God I had not done it."

But when he had drunken his fill of Falernian wine, and was therefore not any longer fearful that he might hear reproaches, he returned to his shop, and sold out all the figs and the oil and the dates, and put these moneys with the others, saying: "It is thine, O son of my Master."

But, on the morrow (having slept ill, for that he had caused a fellow man's ruin and death) he went about again, drinking first in one caupona then another, until, at last, the night came down upon him, and, in a mist of mind, he went to sleep in a strange

place. Arising whenas the sun was again well up, he discerned he was robbed.

Then flew the man around in an agony of gross despair. "Where are the rubies and the emeralds which I bought me, and in which sweet form I would indeed have sent thy wealth unto thee, O Cyrenian Samson? Where are the little bright playthings which did truly belong to thee and which I, a fool—"

He searched his girdle, his cloak, eke his pileus, time after time. Then dug wildly in the sand whereon he had lain, rushing from spot to spot like one with a demon. Wider and wider grew the circles wherein he sought, more and more rapid his motions. At length, beholding one that, staff in hand, did travel a near-by road, he flew to him, saying: "I prithee give me back my money. It was not indeed mine, but my master's—my master's son's. I prithee give it me back."

But the man did buffet him sorely, and, not having uttered a word, passed on.

Then ran Trivialis toward the city, which he descried at a little distance, and, seeing a man coming hitherward, attended by slaves, he ran quickly up, crying: "Give me, oh give me back my money! The jewels! The jewels thou didst steal from me yesternight as I lay a-drunken in yon corner."

Said the man to him, "Thou runaway slave and fool thou! Hast lost thy master's money, and gone a-crazed over it? Give him of good blows a plenty, O my servants, that hereafter he may remember and be more careful with the property of him that doth own him."

The servants beat Trivialis sore, and left him as one dead.

But, in the cool of the evening, he revived and went back into the city, saying to each and every man he met: "Give me, I prithee, back the money thou didst steal from me."

They thought him demented, and one said to another: "Is not this crazy fellow Trivialis, he that undersold Hostilis and so destroyed him? The gods have taken revenge."

When he heard this, Trivialis slipt forth out of the city, and, for long days, wandered the roads of Attica and Sparta, pretending at one time to be a travelling sophist, at another a runaway slave (for so he did secure from them that were truly slaves both food and shelter) and again he played the simple parasite upon some yet simpler countryman.

On a day, he yawned very slowly. Then, being in a corner alone, he cried out: "Ah-*hum!* When a man is a homeless fool, he had better be married."

CHAPTER VII

The Lesser Serpent

After their battle, the Greek, each day, taught the Jew the art of being a dimachærus, or two-handed swordsman. And there were those who were fools and who watched and stood at a little distance, mimicking the motions both of pupil and of master. But the pupil gathered strength and skill each day, and the heart of the Jew and the heart of the Greek were closely knit together each unto each, and wholly and forever ligamented.

Now, on a certain evening, when the Jew arose, there was no Greek beside him. Not till the figs and the dates had been all consumed, and the tents unstaked, and the bells set upon the horses' necks, did the Jew discover the whereabouts of his friend. At just a little journey from the camp, hidden therefrom by a ridge of turmoiled sand, he beheld Lampadephorus. Deep in talk he was with a strangely swaddled person, whose face the Jew could not in anywise discover. Yet the man did sit a little bowed on his tall black steed, and keep eternally his mantle about his head. It seemed for a moment as if this fellow might have been the hated Trivialis.

Then came Lampadephorus back, crying: "Ho! Ambidexter! Why art thou downcast? Hast thou forgot the passes I taught thee yesterday? Thou art stubborn material, O Jew, but, like the Parian marble, thou wouldst retain forever the ideas that once were chiseled into thee.—But see! on the morrow we shall sight the walls of Jupiter Ammon, and so we shall journey well on into the daylit hours that we may reach that place and no more night be spent.—Dost thou remember how I showed thee to make the twisted lightnings about thy head with a single blade only, all the while the other, straight in straight out, did set the blood of thine enemies at liberty? Be of a piece with both thy blades, O marvellous ambidexter born, and live down into the wondrous tips thereof. Thou wilt not forget: Thou art the only perfect dimachærus on this earth."

Said Samson, "I will not forget. It may stand me in good stead in the day of my revenge. There are other things I have not forgotten."

At that he felt a calling forth of all the evil there was in him. And behold, on the morrow, a change came also over the face of the desert. For the sands grew much more wrinkled and far sharper and finer, and a wind arose—the ancient desert wind which had

hidden and unhidden many secrets of the sands—bones and treasures and crimes unrecorded. The air grew mistier, even at the very moment that Lampadephorus cried out: "The walls of Ammon!"

Then the wind wailed, and from the cliffs by the caravan track came sinister shrieks, and behold, from a little twisted oasis-road, which wound among many rocks, there issued, on a horse of black, to mingle with the caravan—was it not the mocker, Trivialis? The same dark cloak, with spots and rings of red upon it! The same stiff bend in the shoulders! And all about the figure the same way of clownishness and sheer hollow mockery.

What did Trivialis here?

The heart of the Jew rose straight within him. He said: "I will strike. Mine eyes shall not come off thee, O Trivialis, till I have found both place and time." He brought his fists together, a mighty blow.

The Mocker rode on to the head of the caravan, as were he the one true owner thereof. And when he had entered the walls of Ammon, he dismounted. Giving his horse to the keep of one that straight did lead him within the temple stables, he began to slip and slide among the trees and shadows of a strange garden.

But Samson followed.

How elusive, this mocker, Trivialis! Yet how he seemed to grow, to become more and more majestic amid the temple deeps. How closely he held the mantle round about his bent head.

As he slipped, now here now there, the eye, for a time, could scarcely follow him at all. Yet, once more, there he appeared, moving on where least he might have been expected.

And so he led, like an evil shadow, to a far corner of the dark garden, there, in a place of stinking weeds and choking mists, paused, as if lost in thought.

Up ran Samson-Solomon of Cyrene, crying: "Thou art a cordial for low spirits, my man!" And would have laid violent hold upon him, but that he altogether failed to touch even his shape.

The figure turned slowly round, and the hood about the head relaxed and dropped. And Samson-Solomon beheld not the countenance of Trivialis of Cyrene, but a pale, triangular and mottled face, like that of a serpent. In the midst thereof two black, unwinking orbs. They saw to Samson's soul with unparalleled hatred.

For the first time, Samson observed that even the robes of the man were regal, and that, upon his bosom, was a mantle-clasp of heavy gold, wherein gleamed one great fiery carbuncle. Round the neck was a massive chain of scale-like links, which the majestic being,

with pliant fingers, did ever coil and yet again uncoil most nervously.

The Jew attempted to cry, "Who art thou?" His lax lips only uttered, strangely: "Thou art here."

Said the hissing mouth, which a lean tongue wetted: "Both here and also all about the world."

"I am Samson-Solomon, shepherd of Cyrene."

"Or ere thou wast within the dark of thy mother's womb I knew thee."

"Me!"

"Thee. 'Twas I that sold thee, later, to the King of the South: thou hast forgotten. And I will shape thy destinies. Why didst thou not kill thine enemy, when thou thoughtest thou hadst him alone? To the work another time, O Samson-Solomon of the sheep-pastures of the world, and suffer him not to escape. Now back to the caravan!"

The boy would gladly have refrained from following, yet he went.

And when they twain had gone, and the strange being had received his horse again where the caravan waited, Samson placed his hand upon the withers of the gaunt one's charger (though he had not been told that he should do this) in the stead of that of Lampadephorus.

And, after a while of silence over the wrinkled sands, as the three led on the angling caravan, the Jew said to the mantled one: "I seem to know thou art called 'Ophidion.'"

"I am Ophidion."

"Which, too, signifieth 'a little serpent.'"

"I am a serpent-priest in Alexandria. The temples of Serapis know me; also those of the crocodile at Crocodilopolis; those of the sacred bull, Osiris or Apis; of the jackal-headed man, Anubis; Khnum, the ram-headed god of the water, and Heka, the Frog. I am also priest unto Mut, which is Space, and Seb, which is Time."

Now the Jew thought that Ophidion spake yet again, but when he looked at the man's eyes, behold! they were gazing neither at him nor yet at Lampadephorus.

So Samson said, "Prayest thou, perchance, to Adonai?"

Turned Ophidion upon him egregious eyes, in the deeps whereof were red fires, and wetted his lips, and after a fashion laughed.

The lad began to make exculpation for having spoken of Adonai. But Ophidion: "Excuse thyself not, O shepherd: tell all."

Solomon (though greatly against his will) spake long about his knowledge of Adonai (while the countenance of the serpent-man was covered with its hood) also about his vision in the tomb of Shem,

and the lovely Amahnah, and the sweet-voiced Chazzan, also about the locket which the Chazzan had given him, and the pearls therein, and his genealogy—which was nowhere else to be found, perhaps, than in that locket.

Said Ophidion, without uncovering his head: "Sacrifice."

"Where?"

"Throughout the world."

"To whom?"

"To Seb and Set, but chiefly unto bloody Mars, the god of war."

"But I am to be as a monument—"

"I will prevent thee. Thou shalt sacrifice much unto Mars. Study thou greatly, also, with Lampadephorus. He can teach thee a thousandfold more than can thy Betah, yea and the solemn truth besides, and not lies. Be accursed. Get thy hand from my steed, and take thee back half-way unto the caravan. There remain: there follow.—Lampadephorus!"

So the Jew fell midway back toward the caravan. And he saw the serpent-man Ophidion, with his head all covered, together with the sunny-headed Greek, riding in a strange, deep talk.

CHAPTER VIII

Servants of Cæsar

Now when they had all come to Crocodilopolis, then Samson-Solomon of Cyrene took up his abode with a Jewish rabbi, named Azrikam. But Lampadephorus went to the Brucheium, or Greek quarter, seeking out there a certain house. And having been admitted, he passed all alone to an upper chamber. Here he clapped his hands, and servants appeared, who conducted him into a bath and gave him fresh apparel. Then he ordered parchment, ink and reeds, and, dismissing the servants, attempted to compose his thoughts.

For a time he paced the chamber restlessly. Then he said aloud, "It is all unbeautiful, for why should anyone attempt to strive with Cæsar? I will therefore write as I know that I finally must."

He sat therefore and composed in a secret cypher as follows:—

To the Lord of All the World, Greeting:

I made report, O Cæsar, unto the Cyrenaic spy at Apollonia, even by the hand of the legionary, Adjutor, and again, in the desert, unto the chief of all thy delators, even Ophidion, yet again by the same man a little upon the way betwixt Jupiter Ammon and here, which is Crocodilopolis. And now, in accordance with thy former instructions, I report unto thee, direct, precisely those same matters which I reported to him of Apollonia, and also, twice, to Ophidion.

Know, then, that the treasure which thou seekest was stolen by Dysmas and Gestas, aided perchance by an even worser man, Barabbas. I have determined where the treasure lieth, and as I cannot take many fighters with me for fear of arousing suspicion, the men which I shall take will be of the best—giants and men of great skill, who can overcome anything.

In the margins of the desert, just at the tombs of Cyrene, I came across a man, a youth rather, who will be of the greatest value unto me and unto thee. A lasting friendship hath he formed for me. Hence I am sure that I can prevail upon him to go with me to the place where the treasure lieth, and, if I can, he is worth a hundred ordinary men. Such a dimachærus! Thou wilt see him on a day—of that I am certain.

But Ophidion hath formed an unaccountable dislike unto this youth. I believe he meaneth to rob him of a certain locket—why, it is hard to see. There are pearls in the locket, so the young man told me. Also a piece of parchment with his genealogy writ thereon, the which, as he saith, containeth his right unto a certain priesthood in Jerusalem. Now Ophidion hateth this priesthood. As to what Ophidion desireth, I leave thee, Cæsar, to determine. As Ophidion standeth higher in thy service, O Lord of All the World, than do I, I make no endeavor to hinder the robbing which he intendeth on the Jew. Neither will I help it onward. So wouldst thou have me to do, I truly believe. But if the youth come out of the combat on life and fit for action, I will use him, even as I did just now declare unto thee, for the getting of the treasure from those robbers.

With him or without him, we shall get it—have no fear.

But if only thou couldst see my dimachærus! Ambidexter born is he. By all the gods! I saw him in a fearful fight (as we came along the desert way) with certain of those in the caravan. He drave two score of men about like little mice. Lord of All the World, he is thine ambidexter, and, on a day (I prophesy) will stand before thee on the sand (even as I myself have stood) twice-armed and accomplishing miracles. He is thine. I promise him to the Lord of All this World.

I am deeply beholden unto thee, O Divinity, for the stalwart sons of earth whom thou hast allotted for this expedition, but the youth whom I ran across by accident (if there be such things as accidents) is worth them all, and more also.

I will get thee back thy treasures—have no fear. I am strongly convinced of great success to come, as concerning this matter.

As to myself, I am often filled with the deepest forebodings of evil. I have the strangest dreams. In any case, O Cæsar, I am ever thine. I have always served thee loyally, and thou canst fully depend upon me till I die.

LAMPADEPHORUS.

And when he had written, Lampadephorus made a duplicate. Sealing both the letters, he ordered unto him two servants separately, and despatched the letters to Rome, each servant with his own particular letter, and travelling Romeward by a different way.

But the messengers, having left the house by opposite doors, got themselves together again in a wine-shop. And, therein, when gloriously a-drunken, saith the one unto the other: "I have—hic—wench I will see out here in oasis. Take thou both letters of Lampadephorus thy one—hic—self unto Rome, that I—hic—may be able to see wench. Thou, gotten unto Rome, ere thou goest in unto Cæsar—hic—get yet another messenger to take in letter I'm 'sposed to take. Good 's my goin'. Here's little gold."

Said the other messenger, "Hic—fine enough. Lampadephorus only man. We're gods. Man's drunk, 's good as gods. Overrule him. In gold, into my purse. See thy wench, god."

And Lampadephorus, in the house, sent for yet another servant, and said to him: "Scia (or shadow), sawest thou me today as I entered the city?"

"I saw, O Master."

"There was with me a Jew."

"Yes, Master."

"Watch thou him—thou and yet another watch him. Watch ye, and bring me report of everything he doth. But me ye need not watch unless I so order again."

Thus saying, he went out on the street, and so to the temple of the crocodile, where he knew that Ophidion dwelt, for he craved audience with him. But Ophidion refusing to see him, he went on down to the quays, among the ships, intending there to enquire from among Cæsar's spies the whereabouts of Trivialis. And he learned that the Mongrel, Trivialis, was not in Alexandria, but that, at Apollonia, he had taken a ship for Rhodes. Then sent Lampadephorus unto Samson-Solomon a messenger, saying: "My master, Lampadephorus, hath found out that thine enemy hath gone not unto Alexandria, but unto Joppa." In sending such a message, the Greek had his own reasons.

Ophidion, meanwhile, he that Samson-Solomon had mistaken for Trivialis, paced the floor of a secret chamber in the temple unto the crocodile.

"As I am a righteous man," cried he, "we will get the locket—I and Emah. Trust ye a harlot. Already in the desert a plan did halfway come to me. Idolatry, what a help thou art to all righteous intentions! Without thee I might indeed overcome certain plebeians, but, with thee, procurators, knights, senators, governors of whole provinces, yea, and at length, it shall be even Cæsar himself. For there is no bound to my ambitions. I do remember my boyhood in Mesopotamia: even there I was called 'King of Tyre.'"

He whispered to some imaginary presence. "Now how to go about this? How to get the Jew—his locket? He tarrieth with the Rabbi, the Archisynagogus—which is bad. A holy man. His very name doth signify, 'a help against the enemy.' However, I have a coadjutor within that house. Let Azrikam be accursed. We will get the locket. Let me think.

"Now, Jehovah, I have thee." He placed a hand over his heart, as if in a great, sudden pain. "Accursed! Let me see."

He came in his pacing to a full stop, and his eyes grew dull with pondering.

"He is young," said the thin lips, after a while, "therefore

passionate. Emah, thou wouldst understand. Being young, he is also weak of will. I must tell her, that she forget it not. She must overcome him with her will. Her strength of will, her beauty, her lambent passion. Let it be so, let it be all these. The plan is decided."

And Ophidion summoned the Egyptian priestess, Emah, whose name, being interpreted, meaneth "A Horror, as That which is Felt Toward a Beast," and told her of his intrigue. "See thou, therefore, that the sacrificial meats are poisoned, that the giant, having eaten, may fall into a dulness, so that then we may easily rob him, despoiling him both of his priesthood and his pearls."

She promised to obey in all things.

He went unto an oracle that stood in the temple, and, before he went out into the street, inquired of the oracle: "In all the ages yet to come, shall idolatry pass away?"

The voice was clear: "Images shall pass away, idolatry never."

The man was wroth, and put his hand about his heart, saying: "I would the images might remain also."

Yet he went his way.

And wandered to and fro about the streets—to and fro, and seeing a multitude of things which he meant to worsen. To and fro with resistless energy of will. He seemed to have no nationality, and yet to be of all nationalities. Sometimes he appeared to be of low and vulgar mold, like the stinking inhabitants of the lower portions of the city, again he was high and courtly in bearing. Sometimes grotesque and ugly, he again seemed clad in the beauty of an archangel.

At length he came before the house of the Rabbi where Samson-Solomon abode. "Thy guest," said he, "O holy Rabbi, I will entirely seduce to unrighteousness, nor shall he ever— Be accursed, both thou and he that is under thy roof."

He stopped at a place in the Brucheium, where he made arrangements with a little spy to be upon the boat whereon Emah was to take the Jew (in case the coadjutor in Azrikam's house should fail) the day of his seduction, that he might be able to secure for himself (but not for Cæsar) yet another most intimate report of the ways of Emah upon the boat. He trusted nobody.

Then, to and fro he continued about the streets of the city: hating, contemning; scheming, intriguing; listening, whispering.

CHAPTER IX

The Godward Side

Now Samson-Solomon from the sheepfolds of far Pentapolis sought out the house of Azrikam. And it happened that Azrikam and other elders of the Jews lay, even of that hour, at a banquet in Azrikam's house.

And the soul of the young giant, as he passed on to Azrikam's triclinium, was greatly troubled—not at the glow and Tyrian magnificence of the apartment—hundreds of candles, cooled and perfumed airs, the respectful slaves—but only at this: the sweet solemnity and high holiness of all those blessed elders, in especial Azrikam. Now, Azrikam's face was as the face of Nathan and of Solomon and of them that were with these men and of some that were before them. All at once, Samson seemed to catch the Rabbi's voice, as he said: "My son, already have I fully announced thee unto these, for I have heard of thy coming by a letter from Amahnah. She hath had word about thee out of the desert, and about whither thou didst mean to go. But why hast thou not Amahnah with thee?"

Said Samson, "It is solely because of mine own sin (either of one kind or another) that I came away without The Child of God. Yet it may be that, on some later day, I shall return unto her, and, God willing, espouse her."

Azrikam saith, "At all events, be amid us in sweetness and peace. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

And he kissed the young man, and embraced him, and gave him one by one the names of the holy men that stood about.

Samson would have knelt and kissed the borders of all their garments, but Azrikam said: "Not so, thou who art a priest, and not merely a priest, but one of the course of Jedaiah—which is that of the High Priest himself. Not so. But the rather let us, elder though we be, make obeisance unto thee, who art priest above the common priests."

The elders made obeisance. And Samson blushed, and placed his arms across his breast, after the fashion of slaves.

Whereat Azrikam, well pleased, said: "Having laid aside the raiment of thy dusty journey, come in and be among us."

And when Samson had gone with a slave, and been bathed, and put on fresh apparel, and returned unto them, they all lay again at meat, and Samson-Solomon of Cyrene in the bosom of Azrikam.

Azrikam said unto him, "How fareth the work of the Lord in Cyrenaica?"

Samson blushed once more and said, "Not well. Many there be of our race who go the ways of idolatry, and of all the abominations which do belong unto the worship of false gods." And he blushed once more, for he remembered the hawk, before the which he had himself worshipped. He also remembered Temunah, who had seduced him whenas he had been a captive to the King in the South.

Azrikam said unto him, "Hast thou had an excellent journey?"

Said Solomon, "Lo, a most excellent journey." And he told of the wonderful things he had seen in the desert. But of the blow he had given Trivialis, of that spake he not. At length he said: "Whenas we arrived in Crocodilopolis, this selfsame Ophidion, he that had been so scornful unto me in the desert, he took me to a secret place within this hour, and, making a great pretence at my importance, presented me to a priestess, Emah. 'See!' he cried, 'O priestess, one high above all other priests.' And him," said Samson, "I hated then more than ever before. But [with a blush] Emah is beautiful in the extreme."

Azrikam, when he had gazed on the youth from far Pentapolis, and had seen in his face only the prayers and yearnings of the lonely pastures, said at length unto the rest, as he had just put a great suspicion down: "We do wrong, O brethren, that we suffer our guest even to speak to us concerning these things."

"Yea," snarled a great man with a long black beard and severe countenance. "Yea, we do wrong. But chiefly for this do we wrong, that we say not unto each other instead (with a very priest of priests in our circle) why the Lord our God is best, and why we would have Him in the place of all the other gods. It is a custom from earlier days. Is it not meet we should do this thing now? Is it not meet, Azrikam?"

Azrikam answered, "It is meet, Pérek. Begin, therefore, youth, thyself, and tell us the reason why the Lord our God is better than all other gods unto thee."

But Pérek (whose name meant "Harshness") came before the young man, and hindered his speaking, and said unto him: "See, I will set thee an ensample, whereby thou shalt possibly come to understand the way in which thou shalt speak. For behold, thou art very young, but I have experience.—And this, then, is the reason why the Lord our God is best, and why we would have Him in the stead of all other gods. It is for this, that the Lord is severe. He letteth no sinner escape. Behold He dwelleth in the sea, and on the

land, and on the tops of the mighty mountains. His finger entereth the caves, and draggeth the sinner thence. Who shall escape the hand of the Lord? His lips utter destruction, and none shall get away. Selah!''

Then said still a larger man with yet a mightier beard (and he lay in a flaming garment, but that of the man that had spoken was black) said he, in a voice of thunder: ''I am not accustomed—I mean to speak—I am not—I will only say unto you all that the Lord is mighty—is very mighty—I will say that I honor the Lord because of His might—He—for this it is I have Him before all the gods of the Egyptians, and before all the gods of the Petrans, and before all those of the Canaanites, and before all others of any place or time. He is mightier than—dare I say in this presence—in these presences—He is from everlasting unto everlasting. It is not that He is severe, O Pérek, thou whose very name doth signify 'Harshness.' It is because He is mighty. For this it is that I honor Him.''

Then said another, ''Not that the Lord is severe, O brethren, or yet mighty, do I honor the Lord, but for this, that He is surely the fountain of knowledge. They that study thee not, O Source of All Knowing, they are ignorant men and like wild beasts. They may sit at the doors of temples, and wear long beards, but behold! They lay themselves in the dust, and have known nothing, and it is because they have never known Thee. Is it not so, Father Azrikam?''

''It is so,'' said Azrikam, ''but chiefly the Greeks—''

Then brake in a little shrill-voiced, ape-like elder in a robe of purple. He said—so loudly that all the slaves pricked up their ears: ''Lo, it is not for His knowledge that I honor the Lord, but for this, that the Lord is very beautiful.'' He smacked his baboon lips, and said again: ''He is very beautiful. The stars of the firmament are naught before His beauty, nor the moon nor the sun. There is nothing at all like unto the Lord for beauty.''

Azrikam laughed. ''Thou shouldst have been a Greek.''

But Pérek, without laughing, added: ''Yea, and a condemned worshipper of Apollo.''

The man who had spoken the judgment declared the more strongly, ''I worship the Lord for His beauty, for this alone.''

''Beauty?'' cried another, who lay in a motley garment, and was all fatness and hunger. '' 'Beauty' dost thou say? Let be. I will speak the truth, and not lie. I worship the Lord because of His temporal blessings. I have not said pleasant things, brethren, even as ye have, nor pretended to be solely in love with higher matters. But lo! I am not a hypocrite.''

He would have said more, but a man brake in: "The Lord is a help to all His creatures. For this I worship Him. Whenever I think of Him, I seem to behold a hand reaching down from a cloud. Selah. I have spoken."

"Spoken and said much!" cried another. "Yet not all. Helpful He is, of that there can be no question. But helpful unto whom? Unto the children of Israel. Yea Lord, thou forgettest not thy promises, which were made to Abraham."

"Hath he not indeed forgotten?" cried a surly voice at the farthest of the tables. "Hath He *not* forgotten? The Lord is indeed El-Shaddai. There is nothing that is beyond Him. But let no troubler of that fountain, Truth, declare that the Lord remembereth His people. He doth not remember them. Have I said He hath no cause for His forgetting? He hath a cause. But He remembereth them not. Lo! day and night is Israel buffeted about. The hand of the Roman is against him, and the fingers of all the Gentiles, on the right hand and on the left, be pointed in His very face. The Lord, I say, hath forgotten. He is mighty. He is beautiful. He is the Fountain of all Knowledge, yea and much more also—for all things come from Him. But He is, moreover, severe—"

"For that," brake in Pérek again, "I said that I adore Him, and hold Him as better than any other god. He knoweth to punish, and to keep His fingers in His ears. Selah."

For a time there was silence.

Azrikam, thereupon, said to Samson: "And thou, O priest—thou Samson-Solomon of far Pentapolis—thou priest of priests, being priest of the course of Jedaiah, thou hast not yet spoken. Speak, therefore, and say unto us, not fearing because of thy youth, the meaning which the Lord hath for thee, and the reasons for the which thou worshippest Him."

Then cried Samson-Solomon, as it were with a deep groan, "Adonai!" He could get no further.

He sought once more to speak, and once again cried out: "Adonai!" And yet again he could get no further.

Then once more there was much silence in the great hall. The soft-footed throng of slaves shuffled and padded from table to table, and at times there was heard the splashing of a silvern fountain in the distant atrium.

And Samson remembered the sounds of the laughing waters by the which he had pastured his beloved sheep. The sights of the pastures rose again before him, and he remembered Adonai once more, and all the thoughts and feelings which he had had as concerning Adonai.

Then said he unto all these holy men, "Ye are much wiser than I, O Fathers. And ye—I know this only, that I do love the Lord. O Adonai, Adonai, but I have ever loved thee!" And he brake forth into words of such high praise and sweet affection for Adonai, Adonai the comrade of his all too lonesome hours, that the company ceased to whisper and to stir, believing it listened only to the music of a wonderful harp. Then brake Samson-Solomon suddenly off, as had he remembered a thing better not declared to the elders.

The sweet, grave Azrikam, after a time of waiting, said unto him: "Ah, my son, my son! Thou hast given in this matter a rebuke to us all. For thou art like Father Abraham, who was, as it is written, The Friend of Elohim."

"I would be His friend," said Solomon.

"But sometimes I think that the Lord is very far away from me, that I never shall behold Him at all. Then I seek to forget Him. But lo! I cannot do so, but love Him the more. Yet I would He were not in a cloud, or dissolved in the invisible mist, or hidden beneath the rocks which build the foundations of the great earth. Oh that He might come forth, that He might stand beside me or before me, that He might speak, not in the thunderous voice, but in His own very words, and stretch forth unto me His own right hand."

Said Amittai, who was nicknamed the Benjaminite: "The voice of the Lord is a still voice. Believest thou that thou couldst hear it, that thou couldst perceive it even as the words which now do fall from off my lips? 'There is no voice nor sound, yet the instruction goeth forth to all the world.' Nor doth He take thee by thy hand, and press His lips unto thine even as the lips of Azrikam were lately pressed. But thou shalt know Him in thy heart of hearts, and not by any outward pressure. Lo! it is in thy heart that He cometh unto thee, lieth beside thy table, speaketh a kindly word, and drinketh from out thy cup. Selah. I have spoken."

"I would see Him more plainly," said Solomon. "I seek Him not only in the synagogue, but also in the folds and the fields. Yet, though I know of His blessings, I have not altogether found the Lord himself. Sometimes I seem to remember when I knew Him like a friend; then, once more, it seems I never have known Him at all. Ah! that life is poor indeed wherein we know Adonai but by fits and starts—like the wind that leapeth gustfully when summer is verging into winter, and the grasses are growing brown in all the fields.

"I could say, sometimes: 'How blessed it were to die if only I might then see God.' But behold, I do not wish to die, and yet I wish that these mine eyes might be laid upon Adonai.

"The Lord went before me down the dry bed of the mountain torrent, yet I saw Him not. He led me along the sweet springs of rivers where the wild grasses grew, and yet He showed me not himself. Yea, He took me in the hollow of His hand, but still was neither before me nor after. But that was because that He was everywhere: hence did I see Him not. But I loved Him. O grave and venerable fathers, I loved Him. This one thing I only know—I loved Him. And He was my friend."

So spake Samson-Solomon of Cyrene, and his eyes grew dark and wide with mystery unspoken. Then he said further, "I have looked for Adonai beneath the rocks, and up into the towers, and on to the clouds and the mountain tops and sky. Yet was He nowhere to be seen. Then I have looked the harder for Him, and have listened also. I have heard the sheep bleat, the goats cry, and the eagles scream. I have hearkened to the winds at noonday and at midnight, the pattering of rain upon the grass, and the hoarse moanings of the swollen brooks. Yet never did I either see or hear Adonai. I will look and I will listen again."

Then it was the sweet, reverend Azrikam (and not Pérek, or any of the other elders) which understanded the heart of the lover of Adonai, and all its dangers. Said he unto the boy, "My son, O my son!"

But Pérek looked up quickly,and complained unto Azrikam, saying: "Why dost thou reprove? I see no matter of reproof in all this, but am greatly edified."

"I too am edified," said Azrikam, "and yet— What wouldst thou, Justitia?" (For that stern, if beautiful, servant had entered the room.) But hardly had she started to speak, when another and even elder slave that sate in the distant atrium by the side of the ever-hastening water-clock, brake in upon her, crying: "Vigilia prima! The night is young! Yet early, as well as late, let all men dream of Adonai!"

Said Justitia, with a less angry brow than that she had entered the room withal: "O Master, seest thou here thy servant, even the trifling Deformatus, he that is ever a maker of mischief?"

"Yea," saith Azrikam. "What hath he done now?"

"Stolen," said Justitia, in a calm, but inflexible, voice, "thy gleaming jewels which lay within thine innermost chamber. Them did we find upon him as he slept. And when he awakened and discovered them gone, he crept in here, where he hath listened unto the young Jew—awaiting, like ourselves, a pause wherein he might speak unto thee, but he for pardon and with lies, we for his condign punishment

and with the solemn truth alone. Hast thou, O Master, given thine innermost jewels to Deformatus?"

Said Azrikam unto the despicable thief: "Hast thou stolen those things? Offered not I thy freedom unto thee ten years gone, and would gladly have had thee out of my house? And didst thou not insist that thine ear should be placed against the pillar of my doorway and a hole bored through the lobe thereof, in token thou wouldst stay with me forever, and wouldst not away? Answer me."

Deformatus answered him, and said: "I came in hither, O Master, with a strange defense and web of many lies. If the worst did come to the worst, I meant to inquire of thee a definition of the thing which men call 'stealing,' thus, if I could, to trip thee up with subtle distinctions, fine subdivisions, numerous groupings and split-haired classifications. But behold, the youth from Cyrenaica was speaking of Adonai. And now I would not even attempt to deceive thee. For, from him, Samson-Solomon, I have learned to love the Lord. And now it seemeth that the only thing I can say in my defence is this, that I am deformed and helpless in my soul, as well as in my flesh. For even as mine arms and legs are terribly distorted from birth, and my nose and lips be drawn thus fearfully awry, so also it may be in my spirit. Who knoweth, Master? Here be all thy gems." He laid them down.

Now Azrikam took not the stones, but gazed long on the terrible form of the man. At length said he, "First, I pardon thee, O Brother." Then, unto Justitia: "Send hither at once the surgeon of my house."

But Justitia cried in a rage: "It is not just, Master. It is not at all just, thy harmful pardoning. Nor can any surgeon help thee here at all in the case of a person so detestable and perverted as Deformatus. By all the gods, I say I will not have it so."

But Azrikam coolly considered her. "Stand thou yonder, Justitia, across the table from me, and listen with full intent unto all that I shall say to thee. Art thou a servant here, or art thou ruler of the establishment? Wilt thou domineer, or wilt thou, on the other hand, obey? If not obey, then thou too art criminal, in like manner as Deformatus is, but worse. For thou hast not any excuse.

"But behold, O all ye that lie about the tables and are rich and wise! I, even Azrikam, the ruler of this house, am worse even than Deformatus and Justitia combined. For behold, I have permitted this poor young man to grow thus distorted up in mine own home. Had I done my duty unto him, this had not been so. Nay, young man, it had not so been.

"But the man shall unto the surgeon. And the surgeon shall use his knife, and shall straighten the bones and the lips and the nose. And all the poor distorted features they shall be straight.

"And when the surgeon hath done all his work, and the flesh of the man is well to look upon, then shall we have seen that his soul, possessing no longer any bitterness, shall have an opportunity for its straight growth."

Said Deformatus, "I will tell thee another thing.—Wait thou, O surgeon.—It was, in fact, Ophidion who seduced me to steal thy gems. He also said unto me that soon there would come to thy house a young man named Samson-Solomon, whose locket he much desired. I was to steal the locket, receiving in return for it a great reward. 'For,' said the man of lies, 'the locket, in any case, is mine.' And for all my crimes Ophidion promised me mighty protection, having, as he said, great influence with the authorities."

But Azrikam gave Deformatus a bright jewel.

And the man wept and departed with the surgeon, leaving the jewel behind.

And he that was called Deformatus was made straight in his body by the surgeon, and grew a better man from that hour. For he had learned from Samson-Solomon to love the Lord, and this had begun the straightness in him. On a certain time he confessed Adonai, becoming thereby a proselyte unto righteousness. And his name was changed, and he hight forever after Orthus, or Straight. And gave much help in the world. Going into many places, he taught that salvation is of the Jews, and brought hundreds unto God, until, at length, Jehovah, who long had loved him and supported him in earthly tribulations, reached forth and took him home.

Meanwhile, saith Azrikam: "There are things Justitia cannot understand. But Shiloh, when He cometh, shall understand them and shall teach us also. For behold, mercy may be but a deeper justice." He stood up.

The rest of the company then arose, and, from the great triclinium passed in threes and twos, laughing and conversing, into a long, narrow, and brightly marbled passage. Here the attendant slaves waited, each upon his proper master, all with smoking torches in their upraised hands.

Came he which had said that he loved the Lord because of His temporal blessings, and declared unto Azrikam: "Behold I have been greatly builded up by the sayings of this son of thine, even Solomon of Cyrene. For see! I was not spiritual enough, but dwelt too much upon the things of the belly." And first one and yet another

came before Azrikam and before Solomon, saying: "Behold how blessed were the words of Samson-Solomon of Cyrene as he spake this night." And Azrikam, while his young priest held his head downward, in red confusion, smiled at the departing elders as he were a gentle prayer. He sent all out into peace—holding at the last the young man by the arm, as though, perchance, he might somehow have lost him.

Then closed the Rabbi the outermost and the innermost door, and took back into the house the young priest.

And when they had come to the water clock, then the Rabbi Azrikam, in his robe of ashen purple, stood facing Samson-Solomon of Cyrene. Samson-Solomon, in his garment of springtime green, with a border of gold about the neck, stood, bowed and listening.

And Rabbi Azrikam, Archisynagogus of the place, said unto Samson-Solomon of far Cyrene: "O my son, my son."

And he said yet again, "O my son, my son!"

"What," asked Solomon, "what, O Father and dear Teacher, have I done that thou shouldst stand over against me, and cry in a lamentation (which indeed breaketh my heart) 'O my son, my son'?"

Azrikam wept.

Then said he, "My son, be wise. Be ware, in especial, of that Ophidion, a ruiner of men's souls. Be ware also of Emah. Her beauty is that of the poisonous flower. Remember thy priesthood. Could aught say more? 'They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.' Thy servant, with a candle, awaiteth thee."

CHAPTER X

A Finder of Temptation

When the morning was come, and Samson, arisen, had bathed and put on fresh apparel, then appeared at his door the Rabbi, bringing certain monies and a little letter from Berith, which is Machashebethel. These, as he said, a messenger, the captain of a ship, had just delivered to him. "For the ships of the sea and of the river," said he, "are swifter than the horses of the desert. And so thou hast a letter already."

Samson took the monies and the letter, brake the letter's seal and read:

Amahnah unto Samson-Solomon of Cyrene, Greeting:
Art thou well? If so, then all is well.

Betah, that holy man, is dead. We have wept long for him. Thou shalt weep also.

By him I heard that men, in the market places, did say thou wast gone to Crocodilopolis. We shall be glad to see thee when thou dost return.

Meantime, I look after thy sheep.

I send thee moneys by the Rabbi Azrikam, at whose house I hear thou shalt abide.

When wilt thou return that we may once more see thee?

Forget us not.

AMAHNAH.

And Samson lifted up his voice, and wept for the former prophet. And Azrikam, when he had heard, made lamentation also.

And Samson wrote an answer to Amahnah's letter, very delicate and thankful for the things she had done. And delivered it unto Azrikam.

But, even as he wrote, he thought not of Amahnah but of Emah.

For behold, in a single night, there are many things that may ripen in a young man's mind. And there came to the recollection of this young man certain caterpillars, which, in the folds of Cyrenaica, he had known of an evening, underneath a rock, to fall asleep within a drab cocoon, and yet, when the morning was arrived, to issue as things of unspeakable beauty—scarlet and purple and green, and the shiningest of gold and silver.

He said, "My love for Emah it is like unto one of these caterpillars, for it now hath burst its bondage. But behold I will not gaze upon this woman again, for I am a priest of Jehovah, and shall surely teach a lesson to the world."

But the Rabbi, or ere the young man went out into the street, embraced him and wept over him, saying again and yet again: "Thy strength—thy weakness."

At long length he let the young man go, for Samson said that he wished to see Lampadephorus, then to return unto Amahnah.

And as Samson passed along, he gave great alms and was high compassionate unto many, even unto them that had by their own countrymen been neglected. For such was the use and custom of his people everywhere, in whatsoever land or nation they might be sojourning.

He went to a temple school, whereof Lampadephorus had spoken. But Lampadephorus he found not. Returning to the street, he believed he glimpsed Ophidion. But the form, caught in a hurrying multitude, was swept from view.

By now, having come to the Street of the Sun and the Moon, Samson turned off northward, seeking if he might not in that wise reach to the docks, and so find Trivialis. For he still desired, because of

Lampadephorus, to lay heavy hands upon that man. But all about Samson was now even a greater rushing to and fro. And somewhat stirred within him which he could not understand, a yearning hidden in a thick cloud. This he had ofttimes felt before in the sheepfolds, when the mysterious angling caravans went by, either to or from the city, laden with who could say what wondrous merchandise. But now the yearning had grown. And it filled him later with a very great sadness.

When he had reached the quays, an enormous galley was just setting out for Rome, filled to the brim with beasts for Cæsar's amphitheatre. Another was coming down the current—a trireme, man-of-war. Slowly the three long banks of rhythmic oars, moved by as many tiers of slaves, whose faces passed the portholes silently, rose up and fell again, while clear and strong within the vessel's sides, sounded the deep voice of the hortator and his heavy mallet. A pleasure galley slid out of a basin and on into the Nile. How her painted sails glided above the flat roofs of the houses!

Samson went to a spot where the captains of many ships did congregate, for he had not been wholly satisfied with the message of Lampadephorus. Here he asked concerning Trivialis. One among them, which had come from Apollonia, said: "Trivialis? Trivialis? Yea, I do remember such an one. He shipped at Apollonia, and hath gone on now to Joppa."

Samson inquireth of another (not being able to believe so much as these words), and that other said also: "He is gone to Joppa."

Then said Samson in his heart, turning with intent to go back to the Rabbi Azrikam's house: "I will follow. I will go to Joppa."

"Thou art wholly right," said a whisper at his ear.

Turning yet again, he beheld the serpent-man, Ophidion.

"How knewest thou?"

"I read thy thoughts."

"Perchance thou art a prophet. Tell me, therefore, if thou canst, shall it ever come to pass that I shall slay mine enemy?"

"He shall die within thine arms, but not at Joppa."

"Yet to Joppa I will follow him. But tell me also where I may find the woman, Emah, she that is yet more beautiful even than Amahnah is."

"I have seen no woman named Emah."

"Nay, but thou knowest her well. Thou didst take me unto her yesterday. Her name—Emah— Thou saidst—thou didst promise me—"

"Yea, I do remember now. She awaiteth at yonder quay." And he saw a man passing, and turned and went after him.

CHAPTER XI

Emah

But Samson went down to the quay.

Now the boat of Emah was a marvel of colors and gold. There were broad purple sails and bright bordered screens, and scarlet streamers flying from the rudder-pole and from the masts. Above the prow ran out a golden crocodile over the water, while, just below, at the vessel's side, the gleaming eye of Osiris stared perpetually with seductive meaning.

And the woman, when she beheld Samson, came unto him with outstretched arms, looking in his eyes most steadfastly. Said she, "Am I beautiful?"

He declared, trembling: "Thou art beauty itself."

She led him with her. And she asked: "Art thou alive, O priest of Adonai, and is it good to live?"

"It is good," said the boy, "to live.—Wherever thou art, all is good."

"Embark," said she. As they entered the ship, it began, though imperceptibly, to glide away.

She brought him to the prow, while a soft, diaphanous music sounded, wherethrough there appeared, as he thought, the inmost imagery of the woman's soul. She, turning with a beautiful gesture and extending a seductive arm in the direction of the East, chanted: "In yonder innumerable mounts are countless millions. All are dead. They were once as thou and I are. But now they feel not the sun. The touch of the Etesian winds, it also is as nothing to them. Thou and I, we—still—live. Each moment of today is priceless with the infinite longing of our souls, if thou dost really live—and love. Tell me, dost thou live?"

"In the presence of thee, O spirit of the Nile," said Samson-Solomon, "my soul is as a living fire."

And she took him and led him (all the while by a music like unto a sweetly secret thing) to a place where the light reddened under billowing sails. And there she gave him to a couch that was as a summer's cloud-bank for the softness and the ease of it. She knelt beside him, and nestled her dark head in his bosom.

Then she rose, and, standing above him, gave friendly command.

Luxurious forms came out of the curtained and betasselled spaces, and danced before them.

He leaped to his feet, crying aloud: "Adonai! Amahnah!"

But the Egyptian took him, and held him by the firmness of her will and the softness of her bosom, laughing and saying: "Not Amahnah, but Emah. Art thou affrighted, lovely boy, and only by a dancing? See! we are moving in the way to happiness, and we shall go on farther, even unto wisdom."

So they took the couch again.

And they moved along the Nile, which was full of sweet dreams. Samson heard the boatmen in their shallow vessels, singing as they passed: "Guard us from all evil, O great Osiris, guard us from the snares of Set." And again, "It is merely by his own strength that a giant can be thrown."

And because of the sweetness of the singing a tear stole down the painted cheek of the priestess Emah. The man who was priest of all purity kissed the tear away.

They twain lay in silence for a time, Samson that he might not wake out of happiness, the woman for that she beheld the lad would have it so.

And she plainly remembered, as thus she lay, the words which Ophidion had pronounced unto her: "Hold him with thy beauty and with thy will. He is young—thou canst so hold him. Tempt him! Tempt him with thy great beauty. The charm of the eye especially remember. Keep thy lascivious orbs upon his, and let the lightnings of thy will flash through them. His own will lull into soft slumber. But his fearful passions arouse. So shall we ensnare the foolish one. So shall we come by the locket and the precious signs of his hated priesthood." As she mused, she murmured gently: "Ophidion."

Cried the Jew, "Thoughtest thou also of Ophidion?"

"I thought of him," said Emah.

"He is a secret and a mighty being," went on the Jew.

"He is a strange, strong man," declared Emah. "Death itself could never conquer him. And because of his strength there are those which deeply love him—but not I, not I."

"As for me, I hate him," said the Jew. "When first I saw him by the temple in Jupiter Ammon, I did hate him wholly (as he me also) and all my hatred has increased tenfold each day. Yet, too, he it was that brought me unto thee."

"Hast thou not the evil eye?" inquired suddenly the priestess. "Thou hast surely bewitched me, lovely man. As for Ophidion, may he be ground like paint."

And while they were fanned by the wings of peacocks, and sprinkled with perfumes made of olden dreams, and while marvelous apes and women shook life and laughter all about the deck, Samson spake from time to time unto the woman about Adonai, for his heart, even yet, was filled with the love of the Lord. "Day and night," quoth he, "I loved Adonai. Yea in the solitudes among the bleating sheep, O beautiful Egyptian, I—loved—Him. Often, at night, as I lay sleeping, I dreamed of Adonai, and woke up calling His name—Adonai, Adonai!" Thus, wholly in spite of himself, befitting neither place nor time, spake Samson-Solomon of Cyrene, about Adonai.

And Emah marvelled and was touched, for she, like many another idolater, wot well about Adonai, but, stiff-neckedly, clung to her idols. Yea, even her name, meant it not "a horror of the beasts which are worshipped"?

And Samson, growing bolder as he saw that the woman was listening, said: "Ye priests and priestesses of Egypt, ye do know the truth, but, caring not therefor, will not teach it. Ye do have knowledge concerning El-Shaddai, and yet ye do allow your peoples to dwell both in idolatry and in darkness."

"Be thou not too strait with us, lovely boy," said Emah, "for Moses himself did draw much knowledge of El-Shaddai from the priests of Egypt." And the woman went on to explain unto Samson the Egyptian worship of the beasts of the field, and of the birds of the air, and of the creeping reptiles of the ooze and slime. She said, at length: "Seest thou not that ours is really one with thine own religion? The beasts and the birds and the snakes are, after all, but emblems of the various attributes of thine own Adonai. So that our beasts and our birds and our reptiles, if considered altogether, are exactly the same as is He whose proper name thou fearest to pronounce, and whom, in fact, we worship as truly as do ye Israelites."

Samson thereupon was much affected, for that he saw in these emblems a certain way to comprehend and grasp Adonai. Yet he would have answered her, "So do all idolatries except the basest, for the gist of idolatry is not unbelief, but the coming of any kind of thing betwixt Elohim and the worshipper, on which kind of thing indeed the mind of the worshipper is brought to rest, so that Elohim is forgotten, and then—there is known what follows."

But the woman feared his answer, and would not let him speak. Holding a perfumed hand over his lips, she was thinking: "Would that I were as this Jew is, yet not so easily misled." Unto the Jew aloud: "Speak to me not of Adonai now, but of thyself only."

Then told her Samson all about the Chazzan, and the synagogue,

and even about Amahnah, "the Child of God," and concerning his captivity, in earliest years, by the hand of the King of the South, of his return by Betah, his quarrel with the mongrel-mocker, Trivialis, his swift flight, his dream in his father's tomb. "And the Lord said unto me," continued Samson, " 'Thou shalt serve me as a lofty statue, for I know thy toughness and thy strength. And behold I will chisel thee twice, the first time roughly and the second exceeding fine. And when I have no further need of thee, I will break thee—and yet keep thee.' "

The woman wept, not this time as an hypocrite, but for that she saw the Jew could not speak of himself save as he spake of Adonai. Her conscience was wounded sore. Said she to herself, "My people, Adonai, have wandered far from thee, but the Jews are thy peculiar children and preach of thee in words of fire both day and night." And Samson kissed her not, this time, spite of her great weeping, but continued to chant of Adonai. "Nothing," said he, as in a great dream, "should come between us and Adonai."

The woman interrupted him. Pointing, she said: "See! on yonder bank! The Sphinx! I remember—years ago—I had gone to the Sphinx to rest, to gaze within its inscrutable eyes, if haply I might find therein an answer to vexing problems.

"But there stood at the foot of the Sphinx a man from Nazareth of Galilee called Joseph, and Mary his wife. In the hollow of the Sphinx's paws, they twain had set their only child. His name (said the father unto me) was 'Joshua,' or 'Jesus,' for He should save His people from their sins, also 'Immanuel,' which meaneth 'God with us.'

"And Herod had sought to destroy the child, for that certain wise men had known Him for the Messiah."

"Messiah! Tellest thou truth?" cried Samson.

She sware greatly. Then said, "Therefore had Joseph taken Him, likewise Mary His mother, and had brought them down into Egypt."

Samson cried, "Lo! Adonai, I would that thou mightest let thy servant see thee in the flesh."

At this there came a golden barge down stream a-passing them. Throned upon its poop in glorious scarlet, the snake-like Ophidion.

Ophidion glanced at the priestess of Egypt, and held her with his small, impenitent eyes and so passed in regal majesty and strangeness of power.

Said Emah, sorrowing: "But that was many years ago, and the parents were surely mistaken as to their babe. Let us not grieve, O lovely Jew. When Adonai will have us to see Him in the flesh, will He not come? Meanwhile, drink and be merry, and tell me, O man

with the eyes of blessed dreaming, if ever thou sawest a lovelier scene than is on this boat?—Let there be bright music, and forget that, in yonder cliffs, the dead are innumerable."

The music mingled with the sunshine and with the woman's perfume. Adonai was forgot.

And Emah was now one thing unto the Jew, now another: At one time languishing, at another self-willed: at one time seemingly indifferent and cruel and yet again as soft and tender as a dove. And in all her moods she was very, very beautiful.

She covered his eyes with her hands, and attempted to reach the locket, which, as she said, she had heard was on his breast.

But he held her hand, exclaiming: "No one shall touch the locket save myself and the High Priest in Jerusalem."

She pouted and made as if to leave him for a time, but anon came back, more beautiful than ever, and with her silken mouth upturned for innumerable kisses.

Said she in her soul, "I shall have to take thee to the crocodile. And first I will make thee bow before him and kiss him, yea and worship him also.

"And then I will take thee to the sacrificial meats, and thou shalt eat thereof. And after that the rest is easy."

Samson was bewildered with her changing ways, drunken with the sweet lights of her eyes Delilian. And he only knew that, after a time, they twain had come to a landing-stage of many glorious steps, and that they went, by the sounds of secret and seductive music, betwixt long files of sphinxes, and so to a marble platform, and on and on into a bright, vast temple, whose ceiling was like as the sky for azure, and set with whirling hosts of gleaming stars.

And the prophet of the temple, in a shining robe of leopard's skin, came unto them, and led them unto Sethos, a crocodile.

Its head was decked with massive rings of gold, its neck with necklaces, and its feet with bracelets. It followed its keeper slimily about. And many of the worshippers in the temple stooped down over the beast and kissed it on its heavy-lidded eyes.

Samson, being adjured by Emah that he also should stoop and kiss the beast, thought: "Oh, Adonai, Adonai, this is surely thou, not thou indeed in thine entirety but in one of thine innumerable and infinite attributes." And because he regarded the beast as an attribute of Adonai made into flesh, he stooped—and he kissed.

Then kissed the priestess him upon the forehead, thinking: "My beauty it is, and my strong will also, which have accomplished these things." For she did not understand the Jew. But unto the Jew she

said, "One more thing is yet for thee to accomplish. Eat thou here of the sacrificial meats, which are sacred unto Sethos. Then am I wholly thine. Also the flesh of the table, when thou hast eaten it, shall make thee of Sethos a part, and thou wilt then have given up Adonai. Renounce thou Adonai."

Saw suddenly the woman wherein she had erred. Now she attempted to rectify that error by more lascivious and dominating eyes.

But Samson cried angrily, "Renounce Adonai? Harlot! Thou hast said that, by the way of Sethos, one might come closer anigh unto Adonai. And now thou sayest, 'Renounce Him.' "

The woman placed an arm about his throat, but Samson, perceiving a noise behind, turned fiercely. Then shouted, as he saw the snare: "Traitors! Harlot! Ye shall none have the locket!"

But the strong men of the temple set upon him, and he possessed no weapons.

He ran therefore, as he should have run at the beginning, away from the sons and the daughters of evil, crying: "I have sinned, I have sinned! Yet did I not wholly forget thee, O Adonai."

He dashed to an underground gallery, leading he knew not where, save into darkness.

And coming, in the labyrinthine ways, on a massive gate barred with brazen bars, he tore him weapons out of the bars, and remembering the words of Lampadephorus, how one, with advantage, could fight with many in the dark, he awaited the coming of the strong men.

And later, the people that were up above, beheld the raging Jew come again forth, all bathed in streaming blood, and weapons of brass in both his wounded hands.

And none there was in the temple which durst oppose him, even for a single step.

He ran therefore to the river bank, nor ceased to cry till he had got (by the way of the levies) back unto Crocodilopolis: "Gone, gone, gone! The locket, my precious locket, it is forever lost! Accursed be idolatry! Accursed the workers of iniquity! Accursed all who bow down unto beasts and unto stocks and unto stones! Accursed be ye all forevermore, for my locket—it is now Ophidion's!"

So he went raging on, nor noticed, as he came in view of the house of Azrikam, that Lampadephorus, the bright-haired Athenian, pursued him with laughter and joyous shouts.

And Azrikam stood just without his own door.

Samson went and cast himself on the ground at the Rabbi's feet, moaning: "Oh I have sinned! I have sinned!"

"Like unto that other Solomon!" laughed the Rabbi.

"And my locket, it is gone—the locket and the pearls and the priesthood—all, all are gone forever!"

"Not indeed forever," protesteth the smiling Rabbi. And he taketh from his own bosom the locket, saying: "I saw thy weakness and thy strength, for I understood thee and have been as a guardian over thee. Be thou now as a guardian to thyself. Thy locket is back again."

And he embraced the lad, and kissed him until the Athenian, coming up, cried: "There is need for haste! A ship doth leave for Joppa, where that man is whom thou desirest very much to see. I have passage for thee and myself, also a great abundance of apparel and everything needful. Stay not, but come."

He swept the Jew away. And took him in a boat across the Nile.

CHAPTER XII

Cowards

Meanwhile, Ophidion, in a secret chamber of a house, awaited the return of Emah.

His heart was touched with the memory of many things, for, on the night before, he had become a-drunken, so that now he did reproach himself for here a little and there a little of his iniquities and stiff-neckedness—which, as chief delator unto Cæsar, and as one whose heart was naturally bent on destruction, he had many times shown. "Time was," thought he, "when I might have become a proselyte of the gate in holy Jerusalem. It is too late now.—What! Who knocketh? No one. Again, who knocketh? Emah? Enter thou. What news? If unsuccessful, be accursed."

But Emah, as she went into the room, said, to compose him: "Do not condemn till thou hast heard me."

So, from storming about the apartment he did settle himself slowly down, coiling, like a snake, in a golden chair, to hear good news of evil accomplishments, licking the while his lips with slender tongue. A steady and remorseless leer lay all about his mouth, while his cold, surveying eyes were set, half-lidded. On his forehead was written, as in great flaming letters, Hatred, Deceit, Lust, All Inhumanity.

Emah began to speak softly of the journey whereunto she had enticed Samson-Solomon of Cyrene, at first (because she feared Ophidion) as though she might have been wholly successful, bringing the locket with her, and, as it might chance also, news of the Jew's death. And the little sparkling eyes of Ophidion squinted and dilated, as he thought of the locket with its three imperial margarites. And then—

the title to the priesthood, he would have that also, destroying it. He rubbed his hands and gloated.

Then a swollen vein started out on his pale, imperious forehead, as the woman dropped some word which would show that the locket was not yet quite come.

He leaped to his feet, yelling.

Emah endeavored still to gaze upon him, but her sight failed. She swam in a great darkness and fell to the floor. There the man of evil spurned her, and cried many times: "Be accursed! Fool, be accursed!"

And she was questioned by him further, after a season in which she thought she should die. At length, in her answering, she came to the Jew's refusal to eat of the sacrifices of the dead. "Nor would Solomon," said she, "in any wise renounce Jehovah, but cried out upon me, when I said that he should do this, calling me both trickster and harlot, and saying I had sorely deceived him in that I had said I would bring him closer to Adonai, that he might, in some wise, attain to behold Adonai in the flesh. 'And now,' said he, 'thou sayest I should renounce Him.' "

"Said he indeed so?" questioned Ophidion.

"So did he say indeed."

Then was Ophidion silent for a very long time. At length he said unto her, "Summon thou me many soldiers, inasmuch as I have work for them. Jew, I understand thee now."

Then he laughed a laugh that was worse to the woman, as she left the apartment, even than the blows and the kicks. He said, "We did not clearly see thy soul, Giant of Cyrene. We thought thy lusts and thy youthfulness of will were of themselves enough to overwhelm thee. But behold! the heart and the core of thee is thy worship of Adonai. Who could have known that till once he had attempted thee? Thy weakness is only a portion of thy strength. Behold, I will take thee as thou art. And Hell shall triumph."

The soldiers came. But there was such a look about Ophidion that, when the men both of wounds and of blood did look upon him, some of them fell down fainting, while others ran screaming away.

And a little spy entered, one that Ophidion had placed upon the boat to watch Emah. And he held a report in his hand, but Ophidion tore his throat out.

Then pulled up Ophidion his pallium-hood about his ears, and turned aside his face a little (that the soldiers might be able to endure him) and then called back the men of war which had fled. And having writ an epistle, and made full many a copy thereof, he sent these

copies out by the soldiers unto priestesses in many portions of the world—unto Joppa and Philadelphia; Athens and Rhinocolura; Gades, Rome and Petra; and likewise unto the priestesses of many other cities.

And the letters were filled with haughty injunctions, sly and crafty omissions, strange insinuations, disguised equivocations, most of all with explicit instructions as to how the giant, Samson of Cyrene, might most readily be ensnared, and the locket taken from him, together with lying words as to what the pearls meant which lay within that locket and the scrap of ancient parchment which entitled the Jew to his priesthood in Jerusalem. Finally, as to what the great rewards would be to the thief and idolatress who should win the pearls away from the Jew and destroy his parchment utterly.

. . . . And, in the pastures of Cyrenaica, Leah looked after the sheep of Samson, laboring diligently both by day and oft by night, and seeing in especial that the hirelings kept on about their hard work.

And often she leaned upon her shepherd's crook, dreaming that Samson of Cyrene should, on a time, become her husband. She wept oft and bitterly, for that he had so little written unto her, and had never at all come back.

Word had reached her about the snares of Ophidion, which that creature of Hell had laid for the young man. She, therefore, composed an epistle, of which she sent many copies out, one unto a rabbi at this city, and yet another unto another in that—all warning of the snares which had been set by Ophidion, and many after him, as against the young Jew and his priesthood.

. . . . And, at this very time, was Samson of Cyrene in the desert of Sin, which is eastward of the Nile in the mountains of Sinai, together with Lampadephorus.

. . . . And Trivialis, who was then in Athens, goeth into the country and becometh a laborer in the fields.

And he married a wife, whose name was Agatha, which, by interpretation, meaneth "The Good."

But, on a day, there came into the fields one in a shining raiment, as he were a person of consequence. He said not much at first, but winked and whispered a little and smiled a great deal, and then both smiled and whispered and winked more. At length he said, "I have a message unto thee from one that is my master and also thine old friend."

"But," said Trivialis, "thou art thyself unknown to me. Thy name, therefore."

"Pothus Aporretus, which meaneth 'Secret Desire.' I bring a

word of welcome and invitation unto thee from my master, who as I have said, is an old friend of thine, Dissolutio."

For a time the worker in the field would nowise hearken to the fellow in fair raiment, for he thought: "Were I fooled, 'twere not the first time whereon a fine appearance had pleasured me to my hurt."

But Pothus Aporretus hung about the man for many days, more and more deeply blandishing him, and saying, for ensample, how very much the fellow was missed by Dissolutio, Euryophthalmus (Red-eye), and others of that company, "whose names indeed I need not mention, as Lord Trivialis might easily do so very much for himself. But the harlot Blanditia (Flattery), and many others like her, they—

"And indeed," he added, after a time, " 'twere a sad company if thou go not unto it. For who so like to set that whole fellowship into laughter, especially when a cypellon or two of unwatered wine hath gotten into thine otherwise so cold heart? There will be, I tell thee, the most beautiful women— Behold! thou hast money of thy wife's (as well as that which thou thyself hast saved). It is in thy hands—thy hands—thy hands—"

And at length the fair-clad visitor had his way with the fool, huddling him out of the field and off toward the city.

And Trivialis journeyed unto Athens, Secret Desire beside him all the road, portraying in gaudiest colors the delights which did await (he said) them twain.

But scarcely had Trivialis, being arrived in Athens, joined himself to Dissolutio, when that son of evil asked him: "Why, of late, hast thou so little come anigh me?"

But behold, a rider from the country, who suddenly entered and said unto Trivialis: "Hold it not as a sin against me that I bring unwelcome tidings, for thy wife, even Agatha the good, she is dead. All people mourn for her."

Cried Trivialis, ere the man was gone: "Dead! Then am I free!" And, being by now aglow with the new wine, he shouted: "I am fain to laugh, and that right long also."

"But," said Dissolutio, "thou hast not, as yet, declared unto me this thing, the reason why thou didst not earlier come back to me."

"Oh ho," said Trivialis, in a thickish voice, "didst not thou thyself declare unto me that pleasure is the only sensible object of human pursuit—wherein thou wast truly pupil unto Aristippus? Thou saidst that fame, fortune, even friendship, are only to be desired when and as these things would administer unto pleasure. Hast thou so soon forgotten? Nay, say not unto me thy friendship would have begotten pleasure in me. 'Tis so now: 'twas not so lately. For a time

I needed the sweet regeneration of the country air, and life among rustics. But behold! I be ready again for my old-time acquaintance."

Then Dissolutio, falling upon his neck, kissed him and said: "That I may the better and more firmly bind thee unto me, I will show thee my sister, a woman of incomparable beauty, even Consuetudo Confirmata, or Confirmed Habit. And when thou hast seen her thou wilt say that thou shalt have her always. And when she is thy wife, then canst thou not leave me ever again."

And Trivialis indeed married Consuetudo Confirmata, the sister of Dissolutio, finding her well-favored. But on the day whereon he espoused her, he, laughing merrily, turned full sad for a passing moment, remembering that his former and sober-minded spouse, even Agatha, had once said to him, "Ever trivial shalt thou be, as thy name is. If aught of sadness be within thee, or any earnestness at all or great solemnity, then that is deep down and a-sleeping within thy nature, and only a great one from above can bring it to awakening in such a way that it may live and endure."

And Trivialis, as he remembered, had only said unto her yet again: "I am fain to laugh. And laugh, too, I shall till that I am in a very deep grave."

But Consuetudo Confirmata led Trivialis a queer-roystering life, merry enough at first, but, later, with trumpery tricks and sharp tongue-lashings, and, at length, he found her for a harlot. He findeth also that she hath already husbands living.

Then met he, many a time and oft, as he fared forth unto his work of a morning, Agonus. And after a while, owing to the adjurations of Agonus, he gave the slip to Consuetudo Confirmata, choosing the way in which he believed it right that a man should go.

For a time, too, he was fain to laugh no more. He said, as he wandered: "I have tested, O Lord, the many things of earth, and still am unsatisfied. As to thee, I love thee. That thou knowest, of howsoever little account I may have been unto thee. Yet I fain would behold thee, O Jehovah, and would touch thy hand, and kiss thy garment's edge. Even as thy priest, Solomon, hast supplicated many a time, so pray I now, and beseech that thou shouldst be as my friend—a friend I may see, an audible one also, but not with a shadow of turning."

Yet, at this, he thought he beheld that old boon companion, even Euryophthalmus, coming from a wine-house. He cried, helpless in the suddenly merry heart of him: "I am fain to laugh."

He joined himself unto Euryophthalmus, but, truth to tell,

not that he might again drink. And they twain offered themselves as legionaries to a certain captain which was near. And having taken service, avowed eternal friendship each to each till death should them part. But when, on a day, together with many other mighty soldiers, their company went up fiercely against a small band of thieves, both Euryophthalmus and Trivialis fled backward apace (each by his several way of safety) and, for a time, were not seen of men.

CHAPTER XIII

Only for Javan, Japhet's Son, the Bearer of the Light

"Stop! I'll go no further." So said Samson of Cyrene unto Lampadephorus, the Athenian.

The Athenian answered and said, "Not for *me?* By the singing heavens! Listen therefore, and I will say to thee a thing."

"I will listen, by the splendor of Adonai!"

"My heart, O great Jew, is in the Phrygian mode. It is filled with the sound of trumpets."

"For whom wilt thou battle?"

"Listen."

"I hear thee."

"Have I not taught thee many things, been unto thee a schoolmaster, divided all my learning with thee?"

"Thou hast been in this matter generous."

"Lovest thou me, then, O Samson-Solomon of Cyrene?"

"I love thee, Lampadephorus, man of Athens. And never another friend have I that is like unto thee."

"Wilt thou, then, not fight for me, fight for me most manfully, be my friendly dimachærus, live, or, it may be, die, in a glory of mighty combat by my side?"

Now the Jew was silent for a very long time. Then he looked up suddenly, asking: "Fightest *thou* because thou lovest *me*?"

At this the Greek was hurt. Yet he made not lamentation, but said only: "There was once a time when I did fight for that I well did love thee—no more of that. But now—let us reason—"

"Lampadephorus of Athens, friend of mine," brake in the Jew, "thou art very great and very wise, but thou art subtile also, and hast not dealt clearly by me. Thou saidst at the door of the Rabbi's house, that thou hadst taken for me a passage unto Joppa. Then broughtest thou me forth from the Nile, and joined both thee and me unto all these mighty men on horses. And thou as well as I didst

mount the Thessalian steeds, and eastward to these mountains didst thou bring me. And behold thou dealest but strangely with me even at the present moment, in which thou sayest unto me: 'Fight! Fight thou beside me. Fight in glory. Fight because thou lovest me.' Thou dost not speak of the manner of the men the which we should go up against, nor why we should oppose them, nor for what final purpose. Speak thou clearly unto me, O Lampadephorus, and say to me for whom *thou* fightest. So it may be that I will fight beside thee."

The Greek said, "Yonder! In and out among the rocks they come. Robbers, all that band. They are many more than we also."

He signed to a trumpeter, giving stern command.

And the trumpeter blew, and all the strong men formed line of battle.

"We fight for Cæsar," explaineth the Greek, "for Cæsar, the Lord of All this World. Have I not said unto thee before that I am a servant unto Cæsar? There is none can hold his little finger, while the sands run, or stand within his presence and not quake. He is Cæsar."

"Is, then, Cæsar beautiful?"

"Unbeautiful it is to struggle against him. And some who have broken his treasury have hidden in this desert the pearls, the rubies, and the silver and the gold. And I am deputed to find these things."

"A mere delator!"

"I am delator unto Cæsar, and not his chief one either. Ophidion is that.—Now I see the men of might come winding up the rocks. In a twinkling they will be all about us. Samson of Cyrene, wilt thou fight for me?"

Samson looked off over to the mount whereon the Lord had given the Law to Moses, and all that was in that law came back to him, but mostly the plain command: "Thou shalt not kill."

He said to Lampadephorus, "Thee I love, but for Cæsar I will not fight."

So he rode to a place apart, which was higher than the rest of the battle ground.

And Lampadephorus looked up to him, and grew scornful.

But Samson said, "Behold, I saw these things in a dream last night, wherein one that was bearing a golden torch, placed in each of my hands a Roman sword, commanding me 'fight'."

"Then," said Lampadephorus up to him, "fight."

"But an angel also came," said Samson, "shouting, 'What will ye do? *Thy* swords be swords of mercy.' And he brake the points from the swords."

But Lampadephorus called once again, "There is pay. All this world is wholly at the charge of Cæsar: he will pay thee mightily."

But the Jew cried back in anger, "Did I ask thee for pay? The Lord of the Heaven and Earth hath said unto me and unto mine: 'Thou shalt not kill,' and again, 'He that liveth by the sword, shall die by the sword.'"

"Then thou art a weakling, devoid of all skill, and a craven merely."

But Samson of Cyrene called after the Greek, as he went toward approaching battle: "I claim no warriorship, being priest."

And the Greek cried over his shoulder, "I have depended on thee. See! now they will wholly destroy me, thy teacher, and my bones shall be counted by the beasts."

He joined his singing men in loud battle.

And to and fro the contending forces swayed.

Samson drew still farther off, that he might not be tempted into the battle by the sounds. Against a mighty rock drew he, into its great hollow, with hands across eyes. He prayed, remembering both Temunah and Emah.

Shouted some of the forces of the Greek, "Lampadephorus is down, is slain."

The Jew awoke, then, from his dream of far things, and beholding his Master on the ground, saw that a crimson fountain played from his side, and that his lovely eyes were turning glassy.

Cried he, "Shall I behold the barbarians triumph? By the very Sheckinah, not so. For I have slept in the tents of Japhet and of Javan,[1] and Javan hath ministered unto me, and he is my friend."

Took he the swords up which Lampadephorus had aforetime offered him, and gat not up upon his horse again, but, running on his own legs only and shouting, "Stand back, all ye unrighteous," he drave a great path through the enemy.

And he brake the points from both his swords, but yet fought on and tired not, smiting all both hip and thigh, and from one portion of the field unto yet another.

And he slew a mighty force, and took many prisoners, and brought the captives unto Lampadephorus, who then said unto him: "My dimachærus, O my dimachærus! My friend, my friend!"

And the Jew kissed him, and bound his wounds. And the Master said unto him, "Thou, O son of Shem, didst not love Cæsar, but me, the son of Javan, the son of Japhet, me thou couldst not fail."

[1] Javan, a son of Japhet, was the ancestor of the Greeks.

CHAPTER XIV

The Stair of a Hundred and One Steps

There were, among the men that were captured, the leaders of a great piracy, Dysmas and Gestas and also Barabbas—men of violence and uproar.

And, in the night, while yet the whole company lay resting, the leaders of the captured band, escaping the watch, ran away. But Lampadephorus said, "What matter? We shall get them still, either now or in the months and years to come." And others of the captives pointed the man of Cæsar to where the treasure lay hid, an immense store.

And when the wound of Lampadephorus was healed (which was after many days) then said the Greek, "As we fare toward Petra (for thither, almost, shall we go, and thence thou mayest proceed unto Joppa, but I to Rhinocolura) I will teach thee things more useful and more beautiful by far than any I have hitherto shown thee. For behold! I now will no longer deal doubly with thee."

"Hast thou so done ever?"

"It is not good, generally, that any man should teach another all he knoweth, lest that other should on a day prove unfaithful and turn against his master's bosom that which he had from his lips.

"But now I am sure thou wilt never be unfaithful, and, as I have no son (at least I know not where he is—for one I had in early manhood, but he was stolen from me) to whom to leave these things, I will even now teach them unto thee—to thee who art better to me than many a son unto his father."

With that he began to teach again and Solomon to learn. And lo! the Greek taught the Jew better than any man was ever taught before, especially that the Jew might always be able to defend himself with skill as well as with strength against comers of whatsoever nation, so long as life was in him to be defended.

And these twain wrought together, at the rear of the caravan, in daily exercise and arduous practice for full many days. And the people of all the other nations which were in the caravan beheld them at their exercises; but they, on their part, though curious, did not much learn, or try. But the Jew learned willingly.

But when the Greek solicited the Jew that he should accompany him, the Greek, to Rhinocolura, thence to Joppa and Rome—in that latter place to be a dimachærus before Cæsar, then said Solomon: "I am truly but a sorry priest, and yet a priest indeed and in sober truth

am I—not a dimachærus. For behold, the Lord hath chosen me, and I have, as thou well knowest, in my very bosom, the credentials of my calling. And it was long ago prophesied by Betah, of whom I have spoken to thee before, that, even though I should seek but mine own mere purposes, I should, on a day, go up to Jerusalem, there to become Jehovah's priest. See now, how that prophecy hath been fulfilled! When I left Pentapolis, it was wholly (as I thought) because I had done a great murder and I sought to escape. And, later, I did follow thee because I loved thee—though thou wast a worshipper of idols. Later still, I did take me on to Crocodilopolis, both because I loved thee and because I sought the man on whom I would be revenged. Then broughtest thou me to the desert of Sin—myself being, as I believed, on the straight way to mine adversary. And now I have followed thee, both because of thy heathen learning (which I very much love) and also to find mine enemy again. But behold! we draw not far from Jerusalem, being anigh unto Petra. And now I will do the will of Betah (which is the Lord's will also) and go on to Jerusalem by the Petra way. First of all I will be a priest. Thenafter, I shall find mine enemy."

Then said Lampadephorus, "Forgive me, for I have deceived thee. Thine enemy is not at Joppa, but at Rhodes. And they who said to thee 'Joppa,' (the captains of the ships in Crocodilopolis) were taught to do that thing by me, even for this purpose that I might deceive thee, and have thee by me where I fought—for who can stand against both Greek and Jew?"

The Jew forgave him, saying: "Could I hold aught against thee? thee who hast been my teacher in so many things? In no wise. But urge me not to accompany thee unto Cæsar, for I cannot go."

"Not now, haply," said the Greek, "but later, on a certain day, thou'llt fight upon the sand before great Cæsar, and before all men, for I comprehend thee and thine exceeding great strength, and I do see these matters as it were in the book of destiny.—But thou speakest of teaching. I have taught thee Hellenism (with all which I have received from both the Babylonians and the Egyptians) and thou hast taught me Judaism, O sublime Theophorus, and so I am deeply beholden unto thee—albeit I never could become even a proselyte of the gate. Thy God is a good and great god. Would that I were able to understand Him.

"And now, since thou dost journey to Petra, I will give thee letters for that place, unto a certain Philostephanus, a great philosopher, and a kind of chief among the many in that city which do profess philosophy, of whatever school. And he, for the sake of thy Lampa-

dephorus, will give thee an inn in his house, and will kindly entreat thee in all ways. And he hath two fair daughters, whom thou shouldest know."

Lampadephorus therefore writ and delivered to Samson the letters.

And they came, by slow degrees, with all their treasures, and all their armed men, and all their shackled prisoners, unto the precincts of the scarlet mountains which are called Edom, or "red." Lampadephorus was singing, like a nightingale in his mating time, Cleanthes' "Hymn to Zeus:—Nothing takes place without thee, O Lord, excepting that which bad men do because of their lack of sweet reason; but even that which is evil is altered by thee unto perfection, and is made to harmonize with all thy plans of beauty."

When he had finished singing, he said: "Rememberest thou the day we met, O Samson-Solomon of Cyrene?"

Samson said unto him, "I remember."

Then said Lampadephorus again, "Rememberest thou the day we met, O Samson-Solomon of Cyrene?"

And Samson would have said again unto him, "I remember," but that he could not speak. For, at a little distance, he saw a Roman standard placed at a forking in the roads. He knew then that the soldiers had passed thither and planted the standard for a sign that there the ways did part, the one running upward unto Petra, the other outward to the coast.

The Greek, too, beheld the standard, and, while they twain rode slowly on, said he: "I am sometimes filled with sore misgivings as about my future."

"Yet why?" asked Samson.

"For that he they call Ophidion (which is chief delator unto Cæsar) hath made before Cæsar certain evil reports about me, saying (for one ensample) 'He knoweth too many things concerning thee, O Cæsar, having been in thy service far too long (for him) and he hath also a way, at times, of telling much truth, either in wood, or in color, or in polished form of stone.' And in this wise doth Ophidion poison the ear of the Lord of All This World against me, and that continually. And I do fear the Lord of All This World, that master whom I have served so long, for, though he is powerful, hence good to work for, he is jealous of his authority and sovereign power, hence ill to work for also.

"I have verily, as Ophidion maketh report, been too faithful unto Cæsar, so that he doubtless, as mine enemy well knoweth, often wisheth I were dead. True was this also when first I entered Rome, so that I

built me there a house on the borders of the Subura—leaving a tiny portion incomplete. That part did I finish with these mine own very hands, making a little secret door behind a statue of the goddess of wisdom—let it be as a secret forever between us—and the door did open on a privy passage and a secret stair—a stair of a hundred steps and one. Such a stair was that as often, even at the present day, is built in Rome and there is called *scalæ Græcæ* (or 'Greek stairs'). That stair led down to an aperture, closed with a massive obstaculum, which not many men indeed could lift.

"But get this up, and lo! a means of swift and certain escape! Even were seventy legions of great Cæsar but a little way behind thee, thou wouldst escape."

"Yet thou wouldst surely have landed, so, in the filth of all Rome."

"Yea, amid stercora and squealing rats and putrid corpses—and safety. And, as for things that are sore unbeautiful, why Rome itself is truly the jakes of all this world. And from time to time, as I pondered in my zotheca, all alone, I would turn to the goddess of wisdom, and, embracing her, press a spring which there was in her sacred bosom. And Pallas Athena would turn, and the door fly open, and the way be wholly clear—"

"Unto darkness."

"Thou sayest truly—unto darkness. But every man should have his secret stairway—"

"Unto filth."

"Unto filth and freedom. For I do say unto thee that freedom is often to be had in no other wise than by filth. That is sore unbeautiful, and yet I, thy teacher, do tell it thee as being wholly true.—Would it were not."

And by now they were come to the forking of the way and the Roman standard.

Lampadephorus said unto the Jew, "I say unto thee truly that I do not wish to die, for I joy in all the world, its life, its beauty, its endless variety and inexhaustible strength."

"As I," said Solomon, "in the thought of God, His mercy and His favor."

"Thou speakest truth," said Lampadephorus. "We are very different, thou and I, though both are strong and few could stand before us.—But let me not sadden thee. Look, Friend, unto the East. Thou art still in the young morning of life, and all the world is red with happy promise. May thy days be beautiful, both beautiful and true and good, or, the rather, good and true for this that they are

beautiful. Thy God can never be my god, for I wot nothing of sin, but of thee I have yet learned mightily."

And he took from his pocket the knuckle-bone of a sheep, and said: "It is custom in our country when two friends part, to brake in twain the knuckle-bone of a sheep, each friend to take one part thereof, and to preserve that part forever—unless indeed being in sore perplexity or some great peril, he desireth assistance. And then, if he have but a messenger, he can send his portion of the knuckle-bone, whereby his friend shall know him, and shall come at once to his relief."

And he brake the knuckle-bone in twain, and gave to the Jew a half thereof.

And the other half he placed in his wallet, and having set his countenance unto the westward, started swiftly on his journey.

But the Jew thought long about the history of his friendship with this man: that sudden vision of the beauteous light-bearer, while he, the shepherd lad, stood dejected and at gaze in the desolate darkness of his father's tomb; the happy walk beside him, then, in the dim desert—the instruction he had received from the Master's lips; the fierce battle, in which, at the beginning, the Greek had been as his hateful enemy, but, at the close, his sobbing friend; then the coming of the two to Sinai; the Cæsarian conflict in which he had himself unexpectedly taken high portion and joyous; then the second instruction of him, the Jew, by the light-and-laughter-loving master, who knew the secrets of this world. All these things returned, now, sacredly, unto the Jew.

But, by this, the Greek was far in the distance—a tiny figure, having, as it seemed, a bright light playing round about it. And the Jew watched both the figure and the light, and watched them, and yet for a very long time continued to watch them, until, at length, they had altogether vanished in the vague infinity of blue dust.

And all the while Samson had been sitting a-horseback, very straight and very still, upon one single spot. But, of a sudden, he bowed himself. And casting a corner of his raiment round about his head, he wept sore.

CHAPTER XV

Gillul

There came to Samson a woman's voice, saying: "Why weepest thou, O man of Cyrenaica? On a day thou shalt see Adonai in the flesh: then shalt thou have indeed a friend."

He thought for a moment that he listened to the voice of Amahnah, so like were the words as well as the sound thereof unto that sweet woman's. Turning, he beheld that a short, though resplendent, caravan had come up, the while he had wept for Lampadephorus, and that, in the midst of the camels, was an Edomitish woman. She sate on a milk-white dromedary furnished with little bells and trappings of scarlet, and her face was like the sound of music in a sunlit temple. She it was that had spoke.

And Samson's sorrow left him, and he was filled with a great fear instead, for that the woman was beautiful, and yet strange, and he knew of the power which women had over him who were beautiful and strange. Moreover, the woman did seem to know both him and his heart.

He said, "Woman, whither goest thou?"

She said, "Unto Petra, which is the chief city of Edom, and of all Asia—except Jerusalem," and rode on.

And Samson, who was also Solomon, of Cyrene, rode at the rear of the caravan, for he thought: "I also fare toward Petra, and, in the caravan, I am, in a way, safe from robbers. And when I am come within the city and am wholly safe, I will leave the caravan, and on to the house of Philostephanus."

So he followed, and went in the wake of the splendid caravan toward populous Petra—but only the owls and the ravens inhabit that place today.

And, all the way along, he said in his heart: "Let me beware, O Adonai, of the woman which is both beautiful and strange." And oft-times he cried in the depths of his soul, "O Adonai, Adonai! If ever I do forget thee and thy child, Amahnah, even Machashebethel, then may the scarlet mountains fall upon me and the hills of white and blue cover over my bones." But it came into his mind also that hard it was to serve any God which could neither be felt, nor seen, nor heard, nor anywise come anigh unto. "A sign, a sign! I will have a sign from Heaven!"

Then his heart smote him utterly, for he remembered that in such a mood it was he had wandered from Adonai.

He raised his hand, and sware by his soul's salvation that never again would he seek to know Adonai as a friend, and that all strange women and their ways should be far from him forever.

They came to a place of bones where crosses were, and they that were dead yet upon the wood. And he saw that the soldiers had been here, for, beneath each cross, was a board bearing the words, "Rome and revenge." He said, "Adonai, keep me from all revenges." But, remembering Trivialis, and saying: "That man I hate because he hath made a mockery of God, and not for mine own sake," he rode up close to the hindmost men of the caravan (which were young men) saying unto them: "I prithee, who was she that just now spake unto me, and rideth on the little white dromedary with the scarlet trappings?"

The most of the young men answered not, but looked on him in a maze. One older than the others, cried out: "Now, by the blood that flows upon the stone!"

The caravan stopped. The woman dismounted, and drank beside a well. Then looked she at Samson-Solomon steadily.

She took in her hand a rod and wrote in the sand, then looked on Samson yet again.

And she gat upon her beast, and the caravan moved.

But when Samson had come to the sand by the well's side, he read: "O incomparable one! Thou who art Samson and also Solomon, both strength and wisdom, I would indeed see much of thee, and learn at thy feet the doctrines of God. For I have heard concerning thee and Adonai."

Then Samson bowed himself, and rode on silent and afraid.

And when they had threaded the tortuous defile of scarlet rock that leadeth downward into the city, then went she that was priestess of Dusares (but, as yet, Samson was unknowing of this matter) into a great temple which stood anigh. And the caravan went on.

And Samson was called from out the end of the caravan by a great voice shouting in Hebrew.

He looked, and behold—a Jewish rabbi, both in tephillim and phylactery. The face of the man was like that of Isaiah and of them that were with him and somewhat before him.

The Rabbi called, "I know thee who thou art: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Thou art Samson, which is also called Solomon. As for me, I am Rabbi of this city, and am called Jeezer. But why hast thou not Amahnah with thee, O priest?"

Said the young man, "Hail to thee, Jeezer! It is only because of mine own sins, O reverend Rabbi, that I came away without the Child of God. On a future day—"

"May it be so," responded Jeezer. Then, "I have for thee, in addition to temporal blessings, a little letter from thine Amahnah, which is also Enooth, or 'Affliction,' and Machashebethel, or 'God's purpose.'"

And Samson knew not why, but he loathed the Rabbi and the letter, for his heart was darkened. Yet he said with sweetness, "Peace be unto thee, O Jeezer." He took the moneys into his wallet, and, breaking the seal of the letter, read—

Amahnah unto Samson of Cyrene, Greeting:

Art thou well? If so, then all is well.

We have learned from friends of Azrikam (who have watched over thee) that thou hast gone toward Petra way.

And behold we have also learned that Azrikam, that helper against the enemy, is now no more. We have lifted up our voices and wept long for him. And thou, when thou shalt learn of his death, wilt also weep.

I still look after thy flocks, and send thee moneys by the Rabbi, Jeezer, at whose house we know (by the friends of Azrikam) that thou shouldest abide.

When wilt thou return that we may once more see thee?

Forget not friends.

AMAHNAH.

And Samson lifted up his voice feebly, and wept a little for the former prophet. Then he kissed the letter, saying: "What a pity, O Amahnah, that thou art not so beautiful as is she which wrote at the well. Then should I follow the mind of the Chazzan, and so be thou wouldst have me, would espouse thee."

Jeezer thereupon cried out, "Knowest thou who it was with whom thou camest hither? A treacherous woman, priestess unto Dusares. And, as for Azrikam, hast thou no more of a lamentation for him than this? Her beauty is that of the fungus growing on the bodies of the dead, and she is all hardness of heart. Well is she called Gillul, which meaneth 'Stones,' and well is she priestess in a scarlet city. Be ye therefore wise, and suffer her not to mislead thee, but take heed, lest by a stumbling thou shouldst fall."

And as Samson would have gone upon his way, Jeezer saith further: "Whither goest thou?"

Samson: "About the streets of this city, and then to the house of a friend."

Jeezer: "I am thy friend. Come, abide with me. What! Hearken, give good heed to all I would say.

"O my dear Son, thou hast the calling of a priest. Upon thy bosom is a sacred locket. Within that golden sheath are three rare pearls, beside the credentials of thine ancestry. Adonai is one and not many, and one and not many El-Shaddai. And all the world is full of harlotry and images. Fare not unto the scarlet woman, but keep thee at a great distance from her. Follow not the ways of those

who worship stones, and who take the lives of innocents, and make priestesses from shameless harlots.

"Then shalt thou indeed be as a priest unto thy people and unto all the world. But, if thou hearken not, then, as Betah hath said unto thee, there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot. And, as to thy priesthood, there shall come another—

"Draw not away from me, but be submissive to counsel. Wilt thou be accursed? Take here the oath I will swear before thee. Swear! Swear that never, so long as thou shalt be in scarlet Edom, wilt thou look again upon the vile priestess, even Gillul—swear. Swear also that never, so long as thou shalt be in Edom, wilt thou look upon the stone of Dusares—swear. And swear, O Son, O priest of God Almighty— Swear, O swear. Wilt thou not swear? Wilt thou ever be breaking away from me? Go not, Son. Swear— My Son, my Son."

But Samson-Solomon was sore offended. He cried backward to Jeezer, "Am I an idolater? Am I ignorant of God? I need not ravings, thou who art mad. The Lord is known unto me, as well as unto thee."

Jeezer wailed after him, "Lo, I am well named Jeezer, for I am 'helpless' indeed. And, as for thee, O Samson of Cyrene, thou shalt be as a wanderer and shalt know no rest for the sole of thy foot. Hath not Betah informed thee? Remember when the day shall come. Amid the nations where thou wanderest, there shall be unto thee no abiding place at all. And there shall rest upon thee a curse, as well as a blessing. And when Messiah—"

The Rabbi cast dust on his head, and returned to his house.

But Samson went about the streets of scarlet Edom, hardened of heart and angered, amidst the comings and the goings of caravans. He sold his horse, and fared upon foot. And, as he fared on and on, the rocks retired and the valley opened, and he saw the wide city in its glory both of sin-black rock, and of pale, sickly rock, and of rock of the color of men's bones, and of mendacious amethyst, and lustful heliotrope, and of the yellow of bright gold, and the colors of idolatrous amaranth and ivy, and the sapphire blue of heaven (but fearfully clouded). And mostly the rocks were scarlet, scarlet and red. And, in the living surfaces of these colored mountains, he beheld the innumerable fronts of houses, temples, tombs, and zigzag, winding stairways. And all were carven in the living rock.

He said, "Mine eyes for color are dull,[1] as are indeed the eyes of

[1] "Jews are markedly more color blind than their neighbors."—The Jewish Encyclopedia, I, p. 620, B.

many Jews, but thou, O Edom, art a veritable heaven of bright color, and my soul is glorified by thee, for the eye is the window of the soul. But let me not forget, O God of my fathers, that the beauty of Petra is even as the beauty of Gillul—Gillul in her scarlet cloak and full of shame and all manner of unrighteousness."

He prayed again to be delivered from temptation as toward this scarlet woman.

Then followed he the windings of the high walls of the valley, along a pavement which ran beside their feet. Astonished and sore amazed was he at the countless excavations, the lofty beauty of their pillars, their pediments, their capitals and cornices, their files on files of gleaming statues.

As he followed the wall of massive rock about the vast oval of the city, he beheld from time to wondering time, immense side valleys, which also were lined with tier on tier of temples, tombs and dwellings, beautifully carven and flaming to the enraptured eye.

Into certain of these side valleys he turned, still wondering, for, behold! as he fared on farther and farther into the branching rifts within the mountains, he saw to right and to left innumerable lesser gorges, running out and branching also, and all the branchings were lined with the shining fronts of tombs and of temples and of the houses of the living.

And he said, "What wonder that the Greeks call Edom 'Petra,' which meaneth 'a rock,' or that the inhabitants of this city (seeing that they know no better) are given to the worship of stones."

He climbed a zigzag stairway, which was carven in innumerable flights, winding among splendid houses, and went on up to the top of the city's rampart. There he beheld a score of the "High Places" of the city, with altars and lavers, platforms for dancing, and seats for the congregations.

He looked off southward, in the way of Sinai. And behold, there was a great cloud there. And innumerable heat-lightnings shot across the cloud. He stretched his hands above the city, and cried: "Ye Petrans! Ye are like unto your very houses, which are only half removed and cut away from Nature. Still ye worship Nature in a stone, learning little from Jerusalem, and making great confusion in your minds—of Nature (which is creature only) with Nature's Creator, which is God."

And having returned to the parent valley where the greater portion of the carven city was, he beheld that, in the center of that valley, was another and even greater city, which he had only partly be-

held before, constructed of buildings that were not cut out of the living rock, but were set and builded upward by the hands of men.

And here, in the streets of the builded and not carven city, were many open squares, where trampling caravans met, coming slowly in, with profit or with loss, some from Felix Arabia, some from Alexandria, or Joppa, or Damascus, others from Mygdonia and Philadelphia, or from Persia, Serica, and the Other East. And shelter was round these humming marts for all the beasts that had come in from the desert, and likewise inns for the masters of caravans and the camel-drivers.

The masters, he saw, set their freight on benches, crying it to the world in drowsy, long-accustomed voices—the spices of India, the balsam and myrrh of Hadramaut, robust slaves and rainbowed peacocks, carpets and bright hangings and black boxes and dull gray sacks of silver and ivory and gold (which is full of temptation) and little almug trees and chattering apes, and clinking bags of cold, hard precious stones.

And Samson marvelled at these things, likewise at the great earrings of the men and the chains of gold upon the camels' necks, and the wondrous muscles of the indolent slaves which should earn much money for knowing masters. And something stirred strangely within him, and again he knew not what.

And he went on farther, about the busy streets and markets of the great city of stone, in the midst of a Babel of voices—where, now, for many centuries, only the prowling Bedouin and the lonely bat inhabit. All the rest is silence, for Petra is merely the tomb, rather the bleached-out skeleton, of a mighty city and of a worship which hath been.

Still Samson went on. The motley scenes of life and commercial activity made the hours short. But ever he appeared to himself withdrawn from these things, though in the midst of them—a man set apart by the Lord, and solitary. Yet always there was something stirred within him, he knew not what.

Said he to himself, "By the splendor of the Holy Temple, such things are not for a priest of the Almighty." He went therefore and watched a band of acrobats performing at the corner of a street. One of these, nicknamed "Opisthotonos," distorted the nature of his being, for he threw himself backward till he rested merely on his toes and the crown of his head. Then he trotted with mincing steps round about a tiny circle of which his down-turned head was the center.

Samson heard a near voice, "My master being a philosopher,

knoweth everything, and can prove that anything is either right or wrong, or that it is both wrong and right also, either at different times or even at the same time. He is better with his mouth than this man Opisthotonos with his heels and his head."

"Pooh!" said another voice, "my master is a skeptic. The skeptics are philosophers too, and they have shown that never a man can know anything at all. He is much admired in all the corners of this city, yea even in Alexandria also."

"Alexandria!" cried the first voice, in deepest scorn. "Alexandria! Why my master, though he cometh never adown from yonder lofty height whereon he dwelleth, is known in all the corners of the universe, even in far off—"

"Known for a fool!" returned the other slave in anger. "Do not all men understand that he worshippeth not knowledge, but only the name of having it? Well, therefore, is he denominated 'Philostephanus,' for that—"

But Samson turned upon the slaves, and inquired of them, "Do ye truly know the house of Philostephanus, and can ye shew it me?"

Now he that was servant unto Philostephanus, made answer: "My name is 'Stupidus,' and I am slave to him thou seekest—that great master. See! I will shew you his house."

And he went a little way with him, and said: "Seest thou the steps that rise above yon fountain? Those are the steps that are taken by them that go up unto him. See how they zigzag unto dizzy heights, crossing and re-crossing, anon disappearing into tunnels —follow thou my finger still—and yet reappearing in the scarlet light and again darting into deep wells of darkness—seest thou?"

Samson said, "I see, though it is bewildering."

Continued Stupidus, "Then comest thou out at length on yon level platform. Great and high and white and cold it is up thither. And just at the back of the platform is his house, a retired strange look all about it. Now I must be gone to get my master parchment."

Samson, with a quiver at his heart, went up the winding rocks, higher and higher, dizzier and more dizzy, and with ever greater difficulty to find his way, until he had come at length unto the lofty-pillared porch which formed the cold and carven front of the house of Philostephanus—this man which bore a certain relationship unto Lampadephorus.

The winds sang very lonely in this lofty place.

And Samson turned and saw the city all below him. Even the tombs and the dwellings and the temples that were cut the highest

in the rocks, were all below the calmly supercilious house of Philostephanus.

Samson's heart misgave him. But, placing his hand within his bosom, he felt of the letter which he had received from Lampadephorus. Taking courage again, he knocked at the calmly echoing doors of Philostephanus.

CHAPTER XVI

Christmas Before Christ

Samson-Solomon of Cyrene was let into Philostephanus's house, and then was shown unto the great owner thereof, who, having read the letter of the lamp-bearer, said unto the Jew: "Thou art indeed more than wlcome here, not merely for thine own sake but also for the sake of him that sent thee."

And the Jew took up his inn in the house of Philostephanus, and studied with that man many days. And they had much converse at times about the Greek. But never did Philostephanus descend the zigzag stairway to the haunts of common men.

Now Philostephanus was tall, slight, and very pale and purblind. And ever he looked like one that peered out into a thick fog or darkness.

He had once had a wife, so said he to the Jew, Philosophia, dead these many years, by whom he had had two daughters (and these he presented in due season unto Samson) Solitudo, by name, and Arrogantia. These would sit in the rocky yard before their father's residence, for long, long hours, leaning over the parapet and gazing steadfastly into the nether city; Solitudo crying, at intervals, "I am so lonely—would that a crowd were come," and Arrogantia answering, "Better be contented, Sister, than to mingle with the vulgar multitude." And up would go her eyebrows yet a little further. Sometimes, as she leaned across the rocky parapet, she voided her spittle on the common crowd beneath.

And Philostephanus informed the Jew that these were not all the children which he had had, but that, having, in years gone by, now and then condescended to ramble among the huts and cottages of the lower city, there, on a time, he had had, by a slattern, Multitudo, an illegitimate and unworthy daughter whom he had come to know as Indignitas. Since which time he had lived retired in his rocky mansion, far away from noise, strife, and all the rudeness and ignorance of the common people. "They value my little learning

vastly more," said he, "for that I dwell away from them and live upon a height."

And space and time and matter and the origin of things were all discussed by the proud and learned Philostephanus, but to the Jew, it seemed that his erudite friend had little affection either for one view or for another, if only his hearer would applaud either the learning or the eloquence of his master.

On a day, when, as it happened, the Master would teach his disciple in the outer air, then went he and Solomon forth to the rocky, fenced-in space which there was before the mansion.

And here they sate in learned leisure for a while near the dizzy edge, gazing down on humming marts and silent tombs, and the frivolous sounds of men, men who were stuttering and fretting away their noisy hour before they, too, were gathered into the calmness and stillness of the rocks.

Then said Philostephanus, of a sudden: "I would ask thee as about Messiah, O Jew, for many of our philosophers have spoken concerning him, and I am troubled deeply."

But the Jew rose up, and craved his pardon, and descended to the lower city, for he said in his heart: "I have heretofore suffered when I spake of our religion. Why now should I do that dangerous thing again?"

And when he had come to the market place, he heard a master of a caravan complaining: "Woe is me! That only I had a dozen jars of oil, or ere I start out into the desert! I would give half a silver talent for an even dozen—scarce as oil is here among the rocks. But oil cannot be had."

The Jew said unto him, "Wouldst thou even so?"

The man said, "Even so. For I have sought in all the shops of Petra, and oil is not to be had. Hast thou oil?"

The Jew said, "Wait."

For he had heard, ere this, of a rich man of the city, who was not a merchant but who had gathered too much oil. And he went to that man, saying: "Hast thou oil, and wilt thou part with it?"

"Even so," said the man.

And Solomon paid for the oil a quarter of a talent of silver.

And he brought together him that wanted to gather oil and him that wanted to part with oil. And both they twain were glad, yet the Jew had gained for himself a quarter of a talent also. He said, "There were great joy for me in this, were I not chosen for El-Shaddai."

"Chosen thou art," said a sweet voice near by.

Turning, he beheld Gillul, priestess of Dusares, coming in sober garments. "I would learn of thee concerning El-Shaddai, O Jew. Teach me."

Said he, "Where?"

"At my house."

He declareth, "I do fear thy house, for it is the house of death."

She said, "Thou meanest that it is the house of an idolatress."

Said he, "That mean I."

She answered and said unto him, "Wouldst thou have it so remain, or wouldst thou change it?"

But he, remembering Temunah and Emah, would nowise go with her.

She, on another day, having come yet again to the oil market, and finding there the Jew, said unto him again: "I would learn of thee concerning El-Shaddai."

But he answered, "Have I not already said to thee I would have naught to do with thee?"

"I have another purpose this time in that I ask thee to my house. Thy Law, saith it not: 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth?' "

"It saith it."

"And saith it not also, 'He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death'?"

"It saith even that also."

"Hast thou not," then asked Gillul, "an enemy that hath so blasphemed, making a jest both of God and of God's temple and of all the things which are God's—even God's priests?"

Samson said, "Yea. I am a revenger to execute justice upon him. In the name of the Lord God, I will have upon him a full revenge."

Said Gillul, "I have heard of thee and thy just revenge, and he whom thou dost seek is here in Petra. I also do need revenge upon him—for he hath mocked at my religion too. Come to my house therefore on this night, when the redness of the sun is still upon the redness of the rocks, and I will lead thee straightway unto him, that thou mayest kill him, having thy just revenge, I mine also."

Said Solomon with a shout, "Is it verily so? I will be at thy house when the redness of the sun is still upon the redness of the rocks, and thou shalt show the Mocker unto me."

"I will show him unto thee," said Gillul. "But to do this thing I shall have sore need to take thee by a secret stair unto a secret High Place."

Samson said, "What matter? Can I not climb a stair? Show me Trivialis."

She: "Thou art a true man. I will await thee. Lo! yonder in the scarlet stone live I—the house with the lofty pillars, next to the one that is carven in great blackness."

And he looked, and saw, and remembered the place.

And, awaiting the time, he gave great alms and was high compassionate unto many, even unto them that had by their own countrymen been neglected. For such was the use and custom of his people everywhere, in whatsoever land or nation they might be.

And when the red light of the sun was yet upon the redness of the rocks, he climbed the crooked stairway to Gillul's house, and knocked, and was straightway admitted to the dwelling.

And when he was set, then came forth Gillul, still in sober garments, saying: "It lacketh yet a little ere I can take thee to Trivialis. And when the time is come, a horn will sound. By that we shall know. Meanwhile, teach thou me Adonai."

She cast herself passionately upon the stone floor at his feet, crying: "See! I would learn at thy feet, for long have I wished to know."

And Samson remembered his pride concerning this matter before Philostephanus, but behold, the woman was very beautiful, and he loved her exceedingly.

He therefore opened his mouth and taught her (for he asked in his soul, Should I be as Jonah, and neglect to teach the heathen?).

He said therefore unto her, "See! there is but one God, and He hath chosen Israel for his priests. Even now go I up unto Jerusalem, where I shall be admitted to the High Priest, there to show my locket, in which is my credential to my priesthood. And he will take me to the Hall of Polished Stones, in the presence of the Sanhedrim, and when they have read my parchment and have seen me that I have no flaw, they will wholly array me in a shining garment, and will write my name in the book in which that name should be."

He said also, "And God is wholly good, and wholly wise, and wholly powerful. Yet is he a jealous God too, and will have no other gods before Him.

"Adonai hateth sin, as do all men—but some are sore perverted in their natures. And the gods of the heathen, the Elilim, are not as the God of the Hebrews—Adonai, El-Shaddai. For they are workers of iniquity, and lure the hearts of men from truth and righteousness. They are adversaries of the Savior from sin, servants unto Satan."

Said then Gillul, "Do ye not indeed worship the Lord with images, and have ye not a place that is high, even (as I have heard) on Mount Moriah?"

Samson said unto her, "Ye mean, Have we not altar, court, and laver, even as ye have, and show we not in shadows in our Temple the things that are not of sense—even as ye do? But none of the things at all which are in the Temple do we worship. They are only allegories—pictures of things unseen, which things then the peoples, having beheld the pictures, may understand. But there is no picture of El-Shaddai there. He is beyond all picturing. He and His infinite attributes also—His tenderness, His mercy, His righteousness, His truth, His peace, His love."

The Jew fell silent. And a man that was a slave in Gillul's household, having overheard these things, grew deeply concerned. In after years, having been freed, he went up to Jerusalem, where he became a proselyte to righteousness. Going into many places, he taught that salvation is of the Jews, and brought many others also unto God, until at length Jehovah, who long had loved him and supported him in fleshly tribulations, reached forth and took him home.

Even the priestess, Gillul, because of the things she had just listened to, thought: "Would that I were now as this excellent Jew is—though not so easily misled."

She bent her head in deepest consideration, and out of her bosom fell a letter, that which she had had from Ophidion.

She caught it quickly up, and was covered with blushes. Yet she put the letter back into her bosom, saying: "Let us go without, and sit upon the terraced place, until the horn doth sound."

And they went and sate without, and looked down into the city. And Samson heard distinctly the tinkling of the rings about the camels' necks, and beheld a multitude of torches moving about the irradiated streets. After a time he beheld many a light that was fixed, and moved not. Gillul, who saw this also, said unto him: "See! It is just a little after the winter solstice, and the time is sacred to Dusares. There are lights on all the housetops, where much of the people worship, and these lights move not. But also a multitude is going toward the greatest of the High Places—for there the truest worship of our god is."

Then said Samson, "On a time will come Messiah, and all these things shall pass."

"Cometh He with a sword?"

"He cometh with a sword." And Samson-Solomon dreamed in the presence of the priestess and with wide-waking eyes.

"If He come," fared on the woman, "He may not bring a sword—so say Babylonian magi. Moreover, if so He came, then mightest thou, O most stiffnecked person, resist Him. Thou art a man set in all thy ways, and never a one can bend thee—so be thou like Him not."

"I shall like Messiah," said Samson, "I will worship Him. If He come or ere I die, I shall see Him in the flesh, will touch the border of His sacred garment with my fingers, listen to His holy words with these my very ears, and, when He biddeth me arise, I will kiss Him on each cheek."

A horn sounded.

Gillul arose, saying: "Let us mount to the High Place. Come, let us mount."

They ascended with torches up the scarlet rocks, and went to a secret high place of Dusares.

There they extinguished their flames, for the rites to the god Dusares were ever to be performed beneath the quivering gods of heaven.

Took she that was priestess unto Dusares Samson of Cyrene up before the silent congregation, and set him before them by an unhewn stone that was sacred to Dusares. But the Jew said unto her, "I see not Trivialis"—for he thought alone of a great revenge on him that had been a scoffer at Adonai.

The priestess answered and said unto him, "Be content. Thou shalt see Trivialis." She laughed sweetly.

And she summoned a trembling father up before the congregation, who had with him a little child. Them twain set she down before the unhewn stone.[1]

Said she to the father, "This is December 25. What hast thou as a gift unto Dusares?"

Said he, "I have my child."

"Dost thou give him freely?" then asked she.

The father choked, and looked on his child weeping. Yet he said, "I do. I do give him freely."

Cried Gillul, "Hither, O priest of sacrifices."

A man robed in white came from an excavation in the mountain,

[1] For the ritual employed in the worship of Dusares (Dhu 'sh-Sharā) see, among other authorities, Hastings, "Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics," I, pp. 663 and 665 (both columns); also Wellhausen, "Reste Arabischen Heidenthums," zweite Ausgabe, Berlin, 1897, pp. 48-51 and 101-147.

having in his hand a great blade. Whereat the child did scream and press his head against his father's bosom.

"Father!"

"What, O my son?"

"Lovest thou me?"

"Assuredly, my son. I have always loved thee better than my own soul: thou art unto me first and last and only."

"Who then will be thy son, dear Father, when I am gone? Thou madest for me a little black tent. And who will be my mother's? Art thou sure that this is right, O my father?"

"It is right," said the father. "My son, it is very right. Dusares demandeth it."

"Dusares doth indeed demand it," said in a low, dead tone the white priest. And he signed to the congregation, which arose and began singing, that the god, Dusares, might be unable to hear the screaming of the child, and, being offended by this, reject the sacrifice.

The priest plucked up the child out of its father's bosom, and cut its throat, and the blood spouted.

And the father fell straight down on the rocky ground.

But the priest took blood upon his hand, and, smearing the stone with it, cried out above the congregation: "We come unto thee, Dusares! We come, we come."

And he moistened the soil about the stone with the blood of the child, and, digging a hole beneath the stone, did lay the child's body therein, and so buried it.

And the congregation (Philostephanus among them) left their places, and wildly marched around the stone, crying: "We come, Dusares! Great is Dusares! Holy is Dusares! We come, we come!"

Some did pass their hands both on and over the stone, some lay down and kissed it. All were barefoot, carrying, each, his shoes in his hands.

And Samson of Cyrene was deeply stirred in his soul.

Thought he, "Surely a sacrifice like this which I have seen, were acceptable to Adonai. And surely Adonai is in this stone, for else would a people which is mighty worship such a thing? But these do call Adonai by another name than do I—which is Dusares. And that is all the difference between them and me."

And he stripped him of his shoes, and took them in his hand, and marched with the other people round about the stone, crying "Great is Dusares!" And he felt of the stone, and lay on the ground and kissed the stone.

CHAPTER XVII

Simon of Cyrene

The people went back to their places.

Then Gillul, priestess of Dusares, came hither again, and, taking a goblet of rich old wine, offered it to the Jew, saying: "Drink, and become as one with him we worship in the stone. Thou needest not to renounce Adonai."

But he would not drink, saying: "Let me first kill Trivialis. Then will I drink either unto thee or unto Hell."

So she said, "See! How little it is thou wilt do for me and for Dusares! But I—behold thou me."

She threw her garments off. Even to perfect nakedness cast she them away.

And she ran to an elevated platform, and there, in honor of Dusares, danced and danced again.

And the people shouted wild acclaim. And Samson of Cyrene looked upon her grace with gladness.

But she, beholding, danced as never woman danced before, crying: "Is not my religion quite as good as thine, and any religion whatsoever quite as good as any other?"

And all the congregation cast their clothes aside, and wildly shrieked, and danced also.

But when the priestess had left off dancing, she came and stood anigh the Jew, gazing upon that man with eyes full of ancient dreams.

And a swift fire ran about his body, his nostrils dilated, a wide roaring filled his ears. He reached his mighty arms out unto her.

But she pushed him back, crying: "Not till thou hast drunken. Little wilt thou do either for me or for Dusares, thou Jew."

And she took and offered him wine a second time.

He drank.

She offered him yet another goblet. But he said, "What! Shall a Jew become a-drunken? By the splendor of Jehovah— By my very people—"

The air began to grow sluggish, to turn thick, to be a mere suffocating power. All that passed about him was floating into a dream. As he knew that he was falling, he struggled into great repentance, thinking dimly: "Lord, let me live, that I may punish many evil-doers, and fall no more from thy righteousness." But he knew not truly when he fell.

And she had a number of strong men carry the body aside. And she accompanied it.

Then gloated she above it, saying: "Thou, therefore, which would teach many nations, teach thou thyself. Professing to be wise, thou hast become a fool."

She jerked the locket from his neck, crying: "Ophidion, at length I have secured for thee the precious theca thou hast so long desired."

Came in her mind an image of Ophidion, the only man which held in his grip her heart. But also she was glad in her soul that a god of her own country had come to triumph in this matter. "Thou, Ophidion, great and bright and beautiful as thou art, and in every way admirable, thou hast yet no pride at all in Petra, as have I. Thou art too much of the world at large—so much of space thou needest for the play of thy great abilities.—But, though I triumph with the triumph of my country's god, yet thou alone it is I worship, not Dusares. With all my blood and all my bones I worship thee, as doth Dusares him that is thy master, even Satan."

Now, all this while Ophidion was in a corner of far-off Spain, laughing at the love which Gillul bore unto him, and swearing by all the blood which had ever been shed on the stone of Dusares, that he would use this woman to his advantage. "And when I have done with her, I will cast her away, and she shall be unto me only laughter and a by-word."

But Gillul took the locket from the sleeping Jew, and having long endeavored with it, opened it.

But behold, there were no pearls contained in it at all. Whereat she raged for a long time, vainly.

Yet she found in the locket a little parchment, rolled up in a very tiny scroll. And having unrolled the scroll, she first beheld the genealogy of the Jew, and, after that, these words: "The rightful name of the bearer of this locket, it is therefore Samson, which is also Solomon, for behold he is a marvel both of bodily strength and endurance and also of wisdom and of peace. And he is truly entitled to the priesthood at Jerusalem."

And she hid the parchment in her own bosom, laughing scornfully, and saying: "Ophidion, I will do much better than merely to send the locket and the parchment unto thee. I will also fool the Jew."

She wrote therefore on another piece of parchment (and without any genealogy): "The rightful name of the bearer of this locket, it is Simon (or 'favorable hearing'). For behold, he hath given his

favors freely to priestesses both of adultery and of blood. He is therefore nowise entitled to the priesthood at Jerusalem."

Then rolled she the newer parchment into a scroll, as it were the old one, and placed it in the locket, and closed the locket tight again, and placed the chain thereof about the neck of Samson—so that, haply, he, finding the locket still upon his bosom when he again awoke, might fondle it and be satisfied.

CHAPTER XVIII

Abaddone

On the morning of the morrow, Samson, awakening, attempted to rise. But his limbs were weak and weary. He lay at a little distance from Petra, in a wilderness of rocks.

Then he remembered all that had happened till he had drunken the wine.

Said he, "Accursed be idolatry forevermore. Accursed be all worshippers of beasts and of stones and of images, and doers of all manner of uncleanness and of murder in the names of gods. Accursed be ye and your iniquities, all of you. Accursed be idolatry forever, and all that have to do with it, world without end."

After a time he managed to rise, yet fared but a little distance, and, for the weakness of his limbs, fell down into the shadow of a mighty rock, where, once more, he slept, and sorrowfully dreamed.

And he thought (as he dreamed) that he sate again on the rock before the house of Gillul. The horn sounded. She gat her up to go unto the High Place of Dusares. But Samson, not arising, said unto her: "Hold! I do remember that, in the weary hours of sleep last night I dreamed a dream as concerning my father's steward, Trivialis. I dreamed, and behold I thought that the man had attempted to rob me as I lay on my couch, courting slumber. I believed he had taken the locket which thou dost see upon my breast, and in which are the sure credentials of my priesthood. So I quickly rose, and smote him that he fell. Dying, cried he: 'Forgive.'

"And behold! as I sought to open the poor clasped fingers, they held no locket, but only a venomous serpent which truly it was that the steward of my father had taken from my breast."

" 'Twas but a dream," saith Gillul.

"Aye, but there is ofttime truth in visions. For when the soul, slumbering, beginneth to play with the long day's relics of reality—"

Then brake she in upon him, "Art thou a fool? What would

Philostephanus say? or, better, that bright-haired Lampadephorus whom thou didst weep for just without the hills of Petra? Would he not have declared—"

But Solomon cried, "Let us go."

So they rose and went.

And over and over again he dreamed this weary and untrue dream—a dream in which he should have followed the promptings of yet another dream, but did not so.

And once again he awoke. And first he gat him on his knees, then on his feet.

And he saw Jeezer, that helpless man of God, approaching. And Samson, when he saw the prophet, was wroth, and said unto him: "What have I to do with thee, begetter of evil intention? Get hence. 'Twas thou that didst awaken in me the wish to behold Dusares. For the more I desire to behold the Lord, the more my heart inclineth to idolatry."

Said the Rabbi unto him, "Woe unto me when a man I love shall call me a begetter of evil intention, and shall make me the cause of his unrighteousness. Why hast thou not Amahnah with thee? Thou shouldst then be free from idolatry altogether."

Samson thereupon gathered together stones, and began to stone the holy man, so that Jeezer was fain to flee for his life. Which he did, and cried: "Lord, Lord! He is a priest, and yet will not hear thy voice by me. If thou thyself wouldst only come!"

But Samson of Cyrene, the unhappy scroll-bearer, shook the dust of Petra from his sandals, and departed straightway into the desert, following for a time the wake of caravans, and afterwards going quite alone.

And having lifted up his feet for many days, he came to Hebron, which is in the Land. There he abode at an inn.

And awakening on the morrow, he set off toward Jerusalem, being a-minded to present his credentials to the High Priest.

But coming, after a time, upon a fellow of jovial appearance, he said in his heart: "Behold! this man seemeth pleasant enough. I will accost him, and, so be he will have me, become his companion."

He cryeth to the man, "Hail there, companion of the agreeable smile. My name is Samson-Solomon, of Cyrene. Thine?"

"It is Kakón Hypómnema," said the fellow, who embraced and kissed him speedily.

Thereupon they twain fell into talk. And when they had got but a few miles, behold! each was relating to the other the delights of

idolatry. At length there came upon Samson such a desire for heathen loves as he had never experienced before. Quoth he, "Oh for once again a sight of such a woman as Gillul or Emah! Oh that I might indeed be wedded unto such perpetually!"

Said Kakón Hypómnema, "Thou art the bird for a good net. I will show thee my sister, Abaddone, and, so be that ye like each other, ye may, for my part, become espoused."

Samson, forgetting that he was on his way to the High Priest, challenged him: "Show me thy sister."

Hypómnema, thereupon, took him a great distance out of his way, along a crooked lane which wandered among steep cliffs and pitfalls.

And Samson went to the house of Kakón Hypómnema, and beheld Abaddone. And he tarried with them twain.

And, on a later day, he learned that the man was by no means a Greek—for all his high-sounding names—but a Hebrew, and that his rightful appellation was "Shikkuts," or "Filth," even as that of his sister was "Abaddone." Now both these people were secretly idolaters, worshippers of Baal.

And Samson-Solomon labored with Shikkuts in his fields for small wages. This he did for that he coveted the slattern sister of that man.

And Abaddone needed not to lay court unto Samson, as Emah and Gillul had had to do. For Samson studied the woman ardently, and solicited her, and won her, and took her for his wife.

BOOK III. DIVINE ASSISTANCE

CHAPTER XIX

The City of the Great King

Yea, Samson of Cyrene married Abaddone, sister of Shikkuts and worshipper of Baal.

For behold, the woman was comely, albeit a slattern. And she would go forth unto Samson in the fields, the when he had newly finished communing with Jehovah, and all his soul was filled with longing both to hear the voice of God and to see God. And, at such times, she would talk to Samson concerning Baal, and mingle the delights of religion with the delicacies of lust.

And Samson dwelt in the house of Abaddone, both of her and of her filthy brother, Shikkuts. And he lived but little according to the ways of his prophets.

There was indeed a certain good man, known as Morah (or "Grief"), whose face was like unto the face of Jeremiah and of them that were with him and before him. He sought, at divers times, to speak unto Samson-Solomon concerning his wickedness. On a day, he did just manage to come anigh Samson.

Said he then unto the young man, "Bless me, O my Son, for I come in the name of Adonai."

But Samson, instead of blessing, cursed him.

Then asked Morah, "Why hast thou not, O priest, Amahnah with thee?"

Samson answered and said unto him, "I have my wife, who suiteth me well enough. As for this Amahnah, I know not who she is."

But Morah came yet nigher up unto him. And he declareth, "Thou knowest very well that Abaddone hath many another husband living. Thou knowest also very well who Amahnah is, the Purpose of God. And she bringeth thee earthly blessings as well as a heavenly reward—so be that thou wilt hearken unto me. See! I have here from that woman a little letter which she hath written to me, not to thee. And yet, still, she encloseth moneys, which, she saith, are all for the fruits of thy pastures. And she saith also that, by the friends of Jeezer, she hath learned that that holy man is dead."

Samson saith unto him, "Jeezer? that former prophet? Is he dead?"

Morah moaned in a great heaviness: "Hast thou not, Sweetly Chosen, one little tear to shed over such a prophet as Jeezer?"

Samson flew into a rage, saying: "Get out of my way. If I choose to hear again from Amahnah, I will tell thee. And if I come into need for her temporal blessings, then also will I tell thee. Meanwhile, thou art a brazen and a solemn fool. I go into peace."

Morah lifted up his voice after the young man, and wept. Saith he, "I am well called Morah, for behold I am merely 'Grief.' But thou, O Samson-Solomon, art thou not forever lost? A great punishment shall come upon thee. Thou shalt be confined for an age. A helper from above will be necessary unto thee and unto us all. Messiah, Messiah! come soon."

And on many other days did Morah seek to come up with Samson-Solomon, meaning to say to him many sweet things and precious concerning his priesthood. But that perverse and obdurate young man would nowise hearken, but went away from him quickly.

And, in later years, when Jehovah had sent upon his servant, Samson, the very great punishment which the prophet had predicted, then made Morah a grievous, if divinely beautiful, Lamentation. And the words which he uttered, are they not extant until this day?

But Ophidion was busy, in these earlier times, in far distant parts. For behold, the Jew had shapen, as it were, a habit of idolatry, and Ophidion, knowing this, left the failure to his own devices.

Now, on a certain day, Abaddone, having learned from Samson-Solomon concerning his deep abhorrence of the Mocker, Trivialis, said unto her man: "Accursed be the day I became thy wife—thou who art a sluggard in revenge."

Said Samson, "I am in doubt as to what I should do." And he told her the dream he had had within another dream, wherein he had thought that the Mocker had stolen the sacred locket from his breast, and that, having slain the man, he found in his fingers not indeed a locket, but a venomous serpent, while the treasure still was safe upon his own breast.

But Abaddone said, "A pestilence seize upon thee for a fool. Wilt thou harbor brotherly thoughts of this thine enemy, who is also enemy unto thy God and unto my god?"

Samson told her of the little kindly acts which Trivialis had done for him.

She laughed more scornfully. "What sort of priest art thou these days? Pah! I did esteem thee when thou struckest my brother in

the fields, and all but brake him to pieces. Lovest thou Jerusalem and the Temple that is on Moriah, and yet wilt not so much as smite a scorner thereof? And the scorner scorned *thee* also, and yet thou hast not stricken him."

Then Samson asked her with all humility what it was he should do.

"Now," said she, "thou beginnest to speak like a true man. Hast thou not heard, in any way at all, where that Mocker is that did scorn thee and God, that thou mayest find him and punish him?"

"Nay."

"Then," said she, "I have a plan. My brother and I do know the captain of a ship, and he goeth about the world. A Roman he is and hard. His name, Ardelio, or 'Busy-body.' Say unto him the knowledge thou wouldst have, and he will find it, yea though he have to bring it from the uttermost corners of the earth."

As Abaddone said, so did Samson.

And Ardelio promised to bring news about Trivialis, so that Samson of Cyrene might have upon his enemy a sufficient revenge.

But, on a day, came Abaddone once again to Samson, saying: "The gods confound thee for an impious wretch. What hast thou done of late in the way of religion?" Samson said, "I have observed the Sabbath—so much I know."

"That," said she, "is all thou hast done. But listen and give good heed to what I shall say. My brother, which is Shikkuts, and also I, have, together with some of the wiser of our neighbors, determined to see again the mysteries of Baal, which is also Moloch.

"These are to be in secret, and none shall behold, save them which are privileged as thereunto. There standeth, even now, in the wilderness, a brazen image of the Lord, which is Moloch. Within, it is hollow, for the place of a great burning is to be there. His face is that of a calf, and his hands stretch forth like those of a mighty man who openeth them to receive something from a friend.

"And we, the worshippers, will place in his heated arms the choicest of all offerings—the first born of the house of all them which have children. So shall the child have union with the god, and we that stand about shall have much merit with him also."

Then was Samson aghast at her who had lain in his bosom. Said he, "Moloch is naught, saving as Satan may be behind him. Ye do therefore worship Satan. Let us abhor all these things, and go up unto Jerusalem, and worship the Lord God only, which is El-Shaddai, and which is from everlasting unto everlasting. Baal and Satan, they shall find an end."

She cried, "Fool! Is not any religion just as good as another?

Let us worship not in accordance with one alone, but many. And behold there shall come, at the close of the worship of Moloch, those mysteries which gladden the hearts of men and women which have passion. Moreover, I would have a sign. Thy God which is in the Temple at Jerusalem, He giveth no longer any sign. Where is the sheckinah? And none that is born of flesh can in anywise know Him."

"Unless Messiah come."

She laughed. "Messiah will not come. Of that be sure. Have ye not awaited Him, ye Jews, till all the Land is bloody with Roman rule, yea and much longer also? And ye have not even the sheckinah in the space between the cherubim that have sat these thousand years upon the ark, and still sit, and yet there is no shining in the space which is there between them.

"But the hot face of Moloch laugheth when the children die. And he laugheth yet again when he heareth the rolling of the drums which the people beat that his goodly ears may not perceive the shrieks of children and of parents."

Then, perceiving that she had made a mistake, she went another way about. So he lay with his head in her lap, as she kissed him mightily. And, for the servant of God, he became vain in his imagination, and his foolish heart was darkened. He longed once more for a sign from heaven, in especial for a god that he could both see and touch.

He therefore gave consent, calling Abaddone "Sweetest Tsyria." She, on her part, said: "In the morning I would that thou wouldest go up to Jerusalem, and let the High Priest see thee. For lo! it is time thou didst in some wise give heed concerning this matter of thy priesthood, having been in the Land long."

Samson, in consequence, said unto her: "It is truly well. I shall be a priest in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, but, in secret, I will worship Baal with thee."

On the morrow, therefore, at earliest cockcrow, he (having been advised by Abaddone to watch for robbers) set out toward Jerusalem.

Nor was he, on this day, in his heart afraid to go up unto the City of the Great King, there to offer himself (who was a worshipper of Baal) unto the High Priest of the Almighty. For behold! his heart was greatly an-hardened.

And as he went along the way, he rejoiced in all the differences (for such was his folly) which he saw between this Land of God's and all the other lands of the world which he had seen, saying: "It is my Land, O Lord. It is thy Land, O Lord. It is the Land of thy

people, O Lord God Almighty." And he felt neither jot nor tittle of unworthiness.

So, passing up the road betwixt the white, flat-topped villages, and the fences built of the unhewn stone of the fields, he fared to the west of Bethlehem, saying: "On a day, I will surely return unto thee, O village of David, and village of the Christ that is to be. And I will herd my sheep and my cattle round about thee, watching from Migdal Eder, and, as my course is called for its turn at service in the Temple, I will betake me unto the City, and there will serve the Lord, my Father, my comfort and my strength. And I will be a Sadducee, as well as priest."

And he rejoiced to hear, as he passed through villages, the peculiar greetings of his own and God's people. "The blessings of the true God upon thee." "And to thee and thine the peace of the Lord." "To thee also, till Messiah come." He passed people who wore phylacteries openly, as if they were proud thereof. People who, entering their houses, reached up first and touched the mezuzah, and did not glance round to see if hateful eyes looked.

Sometimes supercilious Pharisees rode past on ass or camel, for the most part solitary, stopping from time to time in the middle of the road to make long prayers with brazen voices. At the corners of their outer robes they had blue fringes, and these were broad and long, on their heads and arms phylacteries, and these were big and bright and stood forth plainly in the sight of all men.

Samson said to one of these Pharisees, "Peace be unto thee, O Holy Father." Whereupon the Rabbi gazed at him with wide, disdainful eyes, saying: "I thank thee, Lord, I am not as this man is."

There came two courtly Sadducees on milk-white mules, apparelled in purple and gold, dainty and delicate and very self-possessed, talking excellent Greek. Samson said to them, "Peace be unto thee—till Messiah come." They looked up in amazement at the giant striding by, and said not anything to him.

Thought Simon, " 'Tis well. For how can they know I too am a Sadducee? Do they wot of my priesthood and locket? Tomorrow—" He swallowed his gall.

He was not much northward of the road that runneth toward Bethlehem, when a rude fellow came out from bushes and walked beside him.

"Thou art a Babylonian?" "Aye."

At Migdal Eder the man departed on his own way—toward the

west. "Peace be unto thee!" "And to thee also—till we meet again." It was only the salutation of the country.

Now, on gaining the little height to the north of "Rachael's Tomb," Samson beheld to the east (not knowing what lay in wait for him) only the wilderness which led off to the Sea of Salt and the blue-black mountains beyond it. Glancing backwards, he saw the white, uplifted houses of rock-built Bethlehem. Turning forward yet again, and going but a little on—

Jerusalem!

The City of the Great King!

Yea, the city of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Saul and of David, and of the Lord God of Hosts.

The City of Messias!

His heart came into his mouth, for he had no utterance.

But after a time he thought, "So long have I staid away from thee, O Jerusalem, I who should have been, these long sweet years, a priest within thy courts!"

He wept.

After a time, growing bolder, he said with a cry, as he gazed on the snowy masses and glittering pinnacles of God's very mountain: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning: Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not—if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

And he said also, "Yonder! In the Hall of Polished Stones! It is there I shall be accepted as a priest of the Almighty." He caught suddenly at the locket on his breast, believing that the precious thing had been lost. Before he found it, his knees were as water.

Then was his soul again exultant. He exclaimed and said: "I shall surely on a day see God. I shall hear His voice, and hearken to the sound of it also. Oh my God, my God!"

But after a time, he thought of what he would tell Abaddone about all these things.

Then, after a little more, he said: "Let me first become a priest in God's temple. Later, I will surely return unto thee, Abaddone, and also to Moloch, and, on a time yet later, unto Gillul and Dusares, and, on a time that is later still, to Emah and the crocodile, yea and also to Temunah."

Then he ceased to remember, to know, to exist.

When he awoke, he was tied, face upward, on the back of a moving camel. A cloth of darkness lay over his eyes, a gag in his mouth.

He cursed within his soul. And he began to blame Trivialis for his wretched condition. "Thou wast right, Abaddone."

God gave the man over to a reprobate mind.

Now the lumbering caravan, of which the beast whereon he lay (as Samson knew from the myriad steps before and none behind) did form the rearward part, came suddenly to a stop. There was bargaining for awhile about the toll at the city gate. Then the caravan started again, entering the City of the Great King. But Samson-Solomon, which was also Simon, of Cyrene, though he had his own two eyes, yet beheld no glory of the place.

But he smelt the smell of the many burnt offerings which were being offered on The Hill. And suddenly there came the bright stentorian tones of trumpets, the trumpets of the Temple, blown by God's priests.

Ah the sweet, Hebraic brass!

"An alarm in the midst, with a plain note both before and after it." So he had many times read, and so he now did find the calling of the trumpets. Then—"Thekiah, Theruah, Thekiah!" Seven times blown—"Thekiah, Theruah, Thekiah!"

He could even (in the chambers of his heart) behold the solemn priests, those holy happy men, with God's own trumpets at their sacred lips—blowing, blowing, blowing—calling, calling, calling God's people.

He was not among those priests, not even among God's people.

"Why hast thou blinded me, Jehovah? Even as the ancient Samson at the mill was blinded by the trivial of earth, so am I blinded now. Wilt thou not take the bandage from mine eyes? Didst thou choose me for a monument unto thee, and shall the Lord God of Hosts have chosen his priests in vain? Give me again light!"

The sound of the trumpets ceased, and the Temple organ pealed forth. He heard in his soul the sound of sweetly solemn singing up, far up, on Mount Moriah.

Angels!

Oh God!

The singing ceased, leaving a void, and he heard but the shifting scurry of the camels' feet. And the voices of all the people were silent, because, as it seemed, the singing up on Mount Moriah had left, within their souls also, an unutterable emptiness.

Then brake suddenly upon the Jew's ear a harsh, bold, impenitent cry—the cry of unspiritual Jerusalem. "Let me know my duty, and I will do it! Let me know my duty, and I will do it!"

A Pharisee!

Came a clap of hands, then the harsh voice once again: "I, even I, that is to say Parush, he that is wiser and better than all the Sopherim of the city, he that keepeth himself apart, whose very name denoteth separation. I, even I, the great Parush, the tender-hearted, will now give alms. Come and see. Come, all ye needy! To you, and to you, and to you. Forget not, anyone, him which doeth these good things—Parush, the man that is separate and apart and higher than all the other people, even scholars—and yet he doeth alms."

CHAPTER XX

The Babylonia

In a well-hid bay of the island of Cypress, lay at anchor, as it were a drowsing boat. Barren mountains stood about the bay, like hostile sentinels. Never a path came to the water.

Out of the ranked holes in the galley, on each of the sides of the ship, ran forth three long banks of oars. But silence brooded as it were a sitting eagle round about the ship, and about the oar-holes thereof, and the places where the oars went into the water. Even the prow-figure (breast and shoulders of a man with head of horned bull) seemed steeped in everlasting, if martial, dreams.

On the top deck of the ship came never a fall of foot, never a syllable of speech.

Yet of a sudden rushed swiftly up and forth out of the forward hatch a rugged, wide-eyed fellow in bright coat of half mail, shouting: "Where art thou, O Master of Marines? Thinkest thou that thou art worthy leader of the forces of Captain Mastix?"

Then partly rose one that had been asleep within the shadow of the hindmost sail, and, leaning on his elbow, "By the very soul of Morpheus," cried he, "dost thou mean to shatter the planks of the Babylonia? Or wilt thou, rather, call down upon us the people living in the depths of yonder hills? If thou art helmsman, such remain. Chide not me who am master of the fighters on this ship."

And he sank back on the deck, being asleep again.

The gubernator, or helmsman, therefore ran up to him, and kicked him, crying: "Wilt thou be a-drunken? Already hast slept a day and yet another. Awaken and arise, for Mastix will soon return. Even as he did say unto us, so cometh he back. And behold! the men that are under thee, are they in better state than thou?"

But the master of the soldiers said unto him, "Be accursed.

Mastix will not return. He hath been killed, belike. And, if he come not back by morning, I will take over the ship, and be myself the captain. Am not I as good a thief as he? There now. Let me slumber." Once again he snored.

Then came to the helmsman another that was friend unto the master of marines, and said: "Let him that sleepeth, sleep. Mastix will never return, and then the master of the marines, he shall be captain for us. For behold, our present captain hath done a foolhardy thing in that he hath gone unto Palestine to waylay men, and bring them down to Caesarea, thence by the dangerous ways of the sea until here. Better to have staid short-handed than to have walked into the jaws of Rome.—Come, therefore, Gubernator, and join our mutiny. We shall up with anchor, then, and sail to sweetest plunders and success."

But Gubernator looked at the man fiercely. "Traitor!" cried he.

Then set upon the gubernator, from behind, two others of the friends of the master of the marines, smiting him that he fell.

And yet was up again.

Then down again.

Then up again.

And all the soldiers both above deck and below began to become of either party, that of the master of the marines or else that of Mastix and the gubernator. And while the fighting was thickest, some one cried out: "Mastix! Mastix!"

And behold, the captain of the vessel was back among them. His arm was mighty. And there were other strong men with him. Soon, because of these, the fray was at an end.

Then brought Mastix, who was a great, black-bearded fellow, into the ship all the kidnapped men, which he had taken in Palestine, not for soldiers but for slaves, that they might labor at his oars in the belly of the ship. And he set them forward in the ship.

Then called he before him at the back of the ship all them which still were on life that had conspired against him.

And he adjudged them. And he had their ears cut off, and piled up in a heap upon the deck. And of some he put the eyes out also, with heated irons. And the rest he flayed alive, laughing without restraint at their screams.

Those that died he cast into the sea. But the others he set naked on the shore of the wild mountains.

Then gave he unto the master of the galley-slaves explicit instructions as about the new men the which he had just brought.

And Simon was the last to be taken down into the bowels of the ship.

Him they set down into the deepmost belly of the vessel, as the last slave on the left (which was the worser) side thereof, and they chained him to his bench. "That is good enough for him," said that one which fastened his chains, "a dog of a Jew." And they scourged him, and spat upon him, and kicked him mightily.

Then were all those new-brought rowers instructed how to row, and, that done, the anchor was lifted, and the hortator—he which sate at the front of the chamber, with a hammer over a sounding-board—began to strike the strokes which the oarsmen were to follow, and also to cry them out imperiously—*"Un-us, du-o! Un-us, du-o!"*

And all the slaves did pull in unison, and the vessel began to tremble, to move.

Then called Mastix, far up above, to set the sails, which was done, and the speed of the vessel continually increased.

Glanced Samson-Solomon about the slave-chamber. He saw that, on each side of the vessel, ran three long files of naked slaves, each ironed and carefully chained to his own bench. Under each bench he beheld a receptacle for filth, so that no slave at all did ever leave his bench, but slept, at the times that were ordered, by lying sidewise on his bench.

After a time, Samson ceased to watch the ever-bending and unbending hundreds of white backs of the rowers, and began to gaze dreamily through his port-hole, as a bird through the only opening in a solid cage. And ever as his head went forward and down, he looked out over the water to the land. Then he beheld that many high and solemn mountains ran down to the narrow channel. And up among those hills he saw villages, nestling and full of silent peace. In places the mountains overhung and were bare and sterile, in others they were rolling and covered with heavy timber and all sweet greenness.

Throughout the afternoon the galley throbbed and creaked and hummed and moaned in and out of an endless succession of narrow straits and confining sounds. Up above, the wind, a captive in the tense sails, labored continually.

After a while Samson-Solomon, deadened and weary and faint of heart and hopeless, ceased to watch the comings and the goings of the land, and began to notice the melancholy sing-song of the oars, as if there were human voices therein: "You-will nev-er leave-this place-alive! you-will nev-er leave-this place-alive! You-will nev-er leave-this place-alive!" And so on and on, and on and on and on and on.

In the belly of such a ship! God's priest!

Was this a hymn of glory to the Creator, this which now he did hear?

What could the nations learn of Samson-Solomon, that great priest to the Almighty?

There came to the slaves a negro, who distributed water and ill-smelling food. The oars ceased, the sails were taken in, the ship became motionless. The slaves did eat.

Then looked Samson-Solomon through his oar-hole, observing a tiny, templed village lying at rest upon a rounded hill, as though it were a soft couch. The stones in the streets glittered like pearls with the scales of fishes. It seemed a spot where all was happiness, where misery and gloom could never be. A flute sounded, out among the hills. Suddenly the hortator's hammer struck. Hundreds of backs straightened. *"Un-us, du-o! Un-us, du-o!"*

Betwixt the hammerings of the hortator, he caught the occasional low repeatings of the flute. These died away. "You-will nev-er leave-this place-alive! You-will nev-er leave-this place-alive! You-have failed-as priest-of-God! You-have failed-as priest-of-God!"

And so till the thick night came, and he, together with certain others were ordered to stretch out along their benches and to sleep.

Samson slept. And there came no dreams unto him.

And he awoke when a messenger from the hortator struck him and bade him pull again.

He joined him to the stroke, grieving that never a sweetly solemn dream had come to illumine his dull sleep. "I am," said he, "forgotten of God."

After a time the vessel slowed, and men from a boat on the far side of the galley were being uplifted into the ship. Looking through his port-hole Solomon beheld in the sea the inverted heavens—the blue-black, tremulous vault and all the innumerable throbbing hosts of God. What Lampadephorean philosopher was it which had said that many of the stars were worlds like this, peopled perchance with men? Ah yes, Anaxagoras! He could almost hear again the lips of Lampadephorus reviewing the doctrines of Anaxagoras.

Samson's eye picked out in the water one sadly glimmering orb, which, as he fondly imagined, might be indeed a world like unto Earth. Did this globe of ours in its turn appear to people on that orb like a quivering speck of unaccountable fire? Anaxagoras, as the Jew remembered, had said that, given the same conditions of its origin, another world than ours would also in time bear upon it men whose history should not differ in any particular from that of

the peoples on this globe. What, then, of free will there? Sin? Adonai? Messias? Was there really sin upon that speck of fire? Time and space must be there, of course. Were Jews there? Were they there because of sin?

The scent of wild thyme, sweet and overpowering, came from the near-by woodland, taunting Samson of the Cyrenaic sheepfields with his loss of liberty. There were also soft voices on the shore. Laughter.

Still he was looking at the tiny star, that trembling bit of gilded dust sailing athwart the infinite of space and time. Infinite? Time and space and stars and galleys, yea and men's bodies and the lives which are bound up thereunto—

The star began to rise a little, then to sink. A tremor passed beneath the galley. The star, agitated, broke into innumerable points, which, after moments of darting hither and yon, again united, again separated, touched, parted, touched—became once more a single, steady, beautiful, brightly gleaming star, at rest upon God's bosom.

A scourge bit into the Jew's shoulders. He had leaned too far forward!

There was trampling on the decks, muffled voices. One cried out that a life had been taken without need. A heavy body was cast overboard, shortly after that, another. Then the blows of the hortator. "You-will nev-er leave-this place-alive, you-will nev-er leave-this place-alive!"

He passed a night of little ease, fevered by the unaccustomed toil, the foul air, the steady misery above him and before, most of all by his alienation from Adonai. At early morn he was suffered to sleep again.

And when he again awoke, he beheld once more a country that did mock him, a mass of green forest and dense shade.

After a while there appeared, at intervals, in some clearing, a hovel, round as a cask for wine and not much bigger, set underneath a conical jutting roof of straw or wild-wood thatch. And it seemed that happiness must be even in such places. Some hours thence they rode by a land where more men lived and these more skillful, and where the water lay in innumerable directions, into and out of the coast. Listlessly he watched the amazing variations of this world of mingled land and sea, this labyrinthine freedom—the chaos of islets, the mysterious, happy passages which opened and closed among them, as the oar-banks throbbed and throbbed, and the wind, a bitter and rebellious captive, still complained and tore and snapped at the rigging.

And after a little while of looking, he ceased again for a time

to behold the taunting things which lay before his physical eye. For at heart he was ever a dreamer, and now, as never in his life before, he dreamed a waking dream (though a cast-off priest in the belly of a pirate ship) a dream of the Land, of his own people, of his priesthood and of God.

Outside rose the whispers of God's waters, like multitudes of little earnest prayers. Even the waters knew Adonai, and they worshipped Him.

The galley went out from the straits and islands and into the Great Sea, and, pretending to be a harmless merchant ship, put into a port on the coast of Africa, where it sold many things, and returning thence, passed by Alexandria down into the Nile, and having traded at many cities for many days, returned thence, and passed once more through the Great Sea and touched at Malta and again at Spain.

So Samson-Solomon travelled about the world, unmet and unsaluted, cursed and scourged, used and made little account of.

Coming back eastward well beyond Italy, they wound round about certain islands, and came, at noisy noon, so close to a shore that Samson-Solomon could smell the clover of its excellent fields and hear the giant bees a-humming, and all was merely as a bright foil for the blackness of his gloom.

Afterwards they came out into the open sea again.

Then, in the distance, Samson-Solomon's ear caught a strange throb—a great groaning—a solemn, soul-searching vibration of infinite pathos and power. Again and yet again! Rhythmic, regular, recurrent as the note of sorrow in the song of every life. There was no misunderstanding that curious complex of sounds, that sudden plunge and strain, that grind, that groan, that ultimate crescendo of wild, protesting shriek. Splash, strain, groan, and shriek! Splash, strain, groan, and shriek! How often had he not contributed the voice of his own indignant oar to a similar wild chorus of unavailing and inarticulate protest. The voice of his *oar—he* had no voice!

"Pleasure galley!" rang out a voice on deck. "Make ready all."

A mastigaphor came down into the belly of the ship, and began belaboring the slaves that these might pull harder. The rudder-chains creaked, a spot of light from a port-hole circled (as the ship turned) over the back of a slave sitting in front of the Jew.

Then, "All speed forward!"

Now there were music and sweetest singing on the pleasure craft, and all her masts and sides were decked with flowers. Victory! But just as the pirate vessel was about to ram the pleasure galley's side, behold that vessel veered, and there was seen at its own great

prow a ram (though mostly covered with the flowers). And on her decks appeared not drunken roysterers, as Mastix must surely have supposed, but Roman soldiers, piked and speared and a many of them.

"We have been deceived," cried voices. A moment later—"Why care?"

Again the rudder-chains creaked. Again the spot of light shooting backward over the slave before the Jew. Again, "All speed ahead!" And again the scourge on the bleeding backs.

A great shock of the whole ship, a little lifting of her prow, a sudden recoil.

Then, far above, chains clanked, fire flashed, men screamed and shouted. Tramplings went to and fro, steel clashed on steel, heavy bodies fell on decks or splashed down into the sea.

But Samson's deadened soul took little heed as about all these things. He cared not if he lived or died.

An order came to row again.

So he rowed, and saw as in a dream the bending backs of all the other rowers. After a little, as the vessel drew away from the wreck of the war-ship that had been disguised as a pleasure vessel, Samson beheld her reddened timbers casting a smoky blaze over the burnished sea.

Then took the pirates their booty up among the islands of Greece, there to sell it, and so out into a wilderness of straits again.

And, as always, Samson-Solomon dreamed about the Land of God.

And whenever he beheld great flocks of foam go floating by, that looked like ewes and lambs, he became homesick and heavy indeed of heart for a sight of Migdal Eder and the hills and valleys around Bethlehem. Prayed he a day and a night for rescue—prayed with the whole of his heart and his soul and his mind and strength. "Return me, oh return me, Lord God of Israel, unto Jerusalem and unto the Land of Judah. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. And let me, I pray thee, come before thy High Priest in thy Holy house, and serve within thy Temple."

Then suddenly he saw before him, as plainly as with the eye of sense, a vast chamber of imagery. Therein he beheld, first, the lascivious rites of Greece and Rome. He saw, as it seemed, in the temple to Aphrodite of Corinth, hundreds and still more hundreds of prostitutes, fulfilling their "sacred" functions. A voice said, "And the woman I made that the man might love her!" He saw also, at

Rome, the Floralia, which were held in honor of the goddess Flora. And the same voice said, "Have I not made the blossoms that the earth might be a place of beauty? And behold how man hath marred his own joy—with drunkenness, with whoring, with all manner of obscene abominations." He saw, moreover, the Druids of Gaul, as these did make them hollow images of wicker, the which they filled with living men and burnt. And he saw both women and men, Kedeshoth and Kedeshim, who were consecrate unto idolatrous practices. And they marched before him, an unending company. Some worshipped Autolycus, a thief, others the Greek robber, Hermes. He saw the Ithyphalli in the rites of Bacchus, the Athenians in their Ascophoria. There were priests of Cybele, in women's clothes and mutilated, being not as men. And there was bestiality, not only among the Chemarim, but among the multitudes also which followed them. And many men (among these multitudes) committed all manner of uncleanness with other men, even as women with women. The heart of the Jew was downcast utterly. But the Lord said unto him, "Once again, I will shew thee a thing." And he shewed him the rites of Baal. Thousands of images of brass, all heated till they shone like snow. Into the arms of the heated images great multitudes cast their children, each the first born of his own house. And Samson beheld among the multitudes of the Chemarim, a person he well knew and one that led them all. He looked and looked again. Behold it was Abaddone—Abaddone, she that had been the wife of his bosom.

Then cried (as it happened) one that was in the ship, but up above, to Mastix: "Mastix, I tell thee that one religion is just as good as any other." And Mastix assented with a mighty oath even to Hades, him that ruled in hell, that this was so.

But, in the belly of the ship, the more the Jew thought about his falls from the pure religion of Jehovah, the more he perceived that he needed Shiloh. "Am I alone to convert the world to thee, Adonai? And who is there even to liberate me from the ship? Can I alone destroy these chains? Oh, that Shiloh were here! Shiloh, Shiloh! But behold! I brought not with me out of Cyrenaica Berith, which is Machashebethel. What a paltry priest of the Lord of all this universe am I, a slave, alone and captive in the belly of a pirate ship!"

After a time he began to think, "Suppose that Messiah should never come within my days. I should never behold Him, then, at any time, in the flesh. I should never touch His sacred hand, or hear His holy voice. I should not perceive my God until I die."

But he beheld the way in which he was drifting. Therefore said he to himself, "No, not that way. There lieth again idolatry."

He said also, "I see very clearly that I need innumerable little laws which shall be as a hedge about the greater laws of Moses. Parush, I hear, hath made such little laws. Should I ever escape, had I not better become a dyer and dwell beside Parush, and learn, if I may, his multitudes of little laws? Or were it better if I kept on as I started, and became, in the Temple, a priest?"

CHAPTER XXI

Amahnah, which is Machashebethel

In the fields of Cyrenaica, Amahnah, who was also Berith and Leah and Machashebethel, still looked after the sheep of the absent owner, that he might on a day come again into his own.

And much she sorrowed for that Samson did not return, neither sent he unto her any word of commendation or of greeting. Crook in hand, she led the sheep, always by pleasant paths of safety, either up unto the grassy heights or down again to quiet pools the whereunto she had led the waters of the running brooks. And the hirelings watched she also that harm might not be able to come unto any of Samson's sheep.

Now, on a certain day, when her eyes were red with weeping and her heart heavy with the recollection of a shepherd that came not, she tried to forget her olden sorrow in still more gentle and comforting ministrations to the lambs. So she took them softly up into her bosom and petted them. "Leah's precious little Rose and Wool Baby. Come hither, Lily; and thou, Joy of the Wilderness, wilt thou not be fondled too?" Then, seeing that the smallest lamb of the whole flock had strayed and stumbled, and gone down into a ravine, she arose and would have stepped down after the lambling, but that she suddenly heard, though at some great distance, the voice of one who ran. "Leah! Berith! Machashebethel! A letter hath come unto thee from Samson. It hath come!"

She first got up the lamb, and having placed it safely with the others, ran to meet the messenger.

He gave her the letter, and, when he had turned backward on his way, she led her sheep up into a little rocky fold, and there enclosed them. Seeing that all were safe, she sate beneath a shade and looked upon her letter timidly.

Then saw she again in her mind Samson-Solomon of other days, beheld him as plainly as ever she had seen him in the flesh.

He flew with rapture to her side, bent his head before her, and she gazed upon him with immediate forgiveness and also with joy unutterable. "My bride," said he; and she, "My groom."

Then, looking upon the missive again, she feared to open it. So she prayed most earnestly, and, when she had finished, brake the seals upon the letter and unfolded it and read. And the letter ran in this wise—

Samson-Solomon of Cyrene (once the most miserable of men, but now again free) unto Amahnah, the Child of God, Most Happy Greeting:

Wilt thou ever forgive me that once I did forget thee? Forgive, if thou canst, and then, forgiving, read. My trembling fingers scarce can hold the stylus with which I endeavor to write to thee, but, if thou art able to forgive, then, forgiving, read.

And she kissed the letter many times, and, as is the way of a woman, cried over it. And so she read again.

Behold I have been in many dangers since last I did write to thee, but all of the perils which I have seen, I have brought them on myself.

And he told her of his ways in Egypt and of those in Petra, and again, having come into the Land of the Lord, of those worser ways of wickedness which he held to even in Adonai's country. He told her of his journey upward unto Jerusalem, whenas he was of full intent, having reached the City, to show himself unto the High Priest, to whom he would indeed have delivered his locket. But behold, as he gazed at the very city, he was set upon by thieves, who took him into hiding, and having fetched him by the way both of Jerusalem and Cæsarea, unto their pirate vessel, did make him a galley-slave. He spake of his long, long sorrows in the belly of the Babylonia—that wicked school to righteousness.

But after a time (so ran the letter) when I had prayed exceeding long and was very repentant and downcast, and had seen in my mind much imagery and had forsworn all idols forever, then brought the Lord down unto me in the belly of the ship—who but even Mastix himself? And he, when he had come anigh unto me, said: "Thou art a Jew. Canst thou get me music out of a harp?"

I said unto him, "Yea, on a time I might have got thee music either from that or from yet another instrument, but now is all my soul most desolate. To play I cannot."

Gave the man orders that I should be disenchained. As he ordered, so it was done. And I was taken up from out the belly of the ship, and led to the deck.

And there were certain idols there. Mastix said unto me, "Bow thee down unto these idols."

I would not.

Said he, "Knowest thou not that my very name, interpreted, doth mean 'a scourge'?"

I said unto him, "A scourge thou hast truly been unto me, O Mastix, thou and thy great ship also, yet not in such a wise as to drive me unto idolatry, but, the rather, away therefrom."

And again I would not worship.

Then he tried me by fire and in many other ways, but I stood all the tests. And he said—

"I will use thee as a steward, for I see that I can depend upon thee."

So he made me the steward of his ship, and gave me back the locket which had been found upon my neck. But, not long thereafter, we were suddenly set upon by an enemy ship, itself a pirate, called the "Persia," and the master thereof "Apodoter"—which, by interpretation, meaneth "restorer."

And Apodoter prevailed, and the Babylonia was sent to the bottom.

But me Apodoter saved, and, having learned my history, set me safe at Cæsarea.

And now I am in Jerusalem, at an inn, and here have I mine earliest opportunity for to write to thee.

And I must tell thee of a dream which I dreamed about thee last night. I dreamed I was in an unknown country, a wanderer, and separate from thee. And it was night over all that country. But I saw, as it were a great shadow (or concentration of the darkness) which was truly thee, but which, for that it was thee, was very beautiful. And I opened up mine arms, and would have seized upon thee, but that the sun arose, and, as the light came full upon thee, thou didst begin to waver and recede, and at length dissolved into the great light which was there all about.

Would that I had the tongue or pen of Lampadephorus, then would I tell thee of the misery which, at that time, I felt.

Canst thou now forgive me, O Amahnah? I will not wander more, or stray from the ways of the Lord. And even Abaddone, the Syrian, she is gone, as also her brother Shikkuts with her. For they that carried me into captivity, they, the very same, did slay both Shikkuts and his sister. And I will keep the sign of the Covenant, which is our Sabbath, to the finest letter of the Law. And I will learn continually of him with whom I shall later stay, even Parush, and will help him to multiply our laws, that every single law may have yet other laws, and they still others, in greater and greater abundance and profusion, that the laws of Moses may be high-hedged about, and none of the heathen may ever come anigh unto the souls of Jews. May the Lord do thus and more also unto me, if I keep my promise not.

Such, O Child of God, is my history, nor have I shunned in any wise or unto any degree to declare unto thee the whole of it.

Wilt thou suffer me to say more? Be not offended, O Child of God, for thou art very dear unto me, and once the Chazzan, he that dwelt in the synagogue at Cyrene, did say unto me: "Take thou her to wife, so be that she will have thee." But mine eyes were holden, for that I was very young, and did not see thee clearly. Nor did I clearly see thee until that my body was sealed as a slave in the very bowels of the ship. But now I know thee who thou art, as never I did know thee heretofore.

Dost thou remember how, O Amahnah, in days that are gone, we took each other by our tiny hands, both thou and I, and over the hills we rushed with hearts rejoicing, watching our shadows linked together before us in the humble dust, and all the world was God's, and we also? Dost thou remember that, thou who art brighter than the bluest of heavens and far truer and like unto the roses for all sweetness? Dost thou remember? If thou dost remember, and thou canst yet forgive me, after all those my many transgressions, then come thou hither unto me. Come thou unto me, O lily of all loveliness, be thou mine and come.

Come thou unto me in Jerusalem, O Rose of Sharon.

Bring thou with thee the body of Betah. And we will lay it in Jehosaphat, that ever it may be anigh unto us. Would that the spirit of that man might also come.

And we will live, both thou and I, in the House of Bread, which is Bethlehem, and which is anigh unto Jerusalem. And I will watch the sacred sheep which feed round about Migdal Eder, and thou shalt keep the blessing in my house.

Wilt thou come?

I will not go up unto the Temple, there to show me to the High Priest until I know that thou art with me in the Land. But then, if thou comest and consentest, I will go. And I shall then be a priest, and will serve the Lord our God in His holy Temple on the mountain each time whenas my sacred course is called.

And on each of my other days I will watch my sheep, which shall be about the tower of Eder.

Wilt thou not come?

And Amahnah ran with gladness, and answered the letter of Samson, which was also Solomon, of Cyrene, on that very night. And she writ full many a pleasant thing unto him.

CHAPTER XXII

Rejected and Despised of Men

So Amahnah came to Jerusalem, and brought the dead body of the Chazzan with her, which had been embalmed. And Samson laid the body in the Valley of Jehosaphat, that it might be ever anigh unto them twain.

Then was celebrated the joyful wedding of Samson-Solomon with Amahnah, or Berith, which was also Machashebethel.

And they twain gat them down unto Bethlehem to live.

Then said Samson to his bride, "Now that thou art with me, I have full courage to go up unto the Hall of Polished Stones, there to show my title to the priesthood." He held his arms out wide to her, and she kissed him and bade him go into peace.

So he went up to Jerusalem, saying to the keeper of the door to the Hall of Polished Stones: "Say thou unto him that is High Priest that one from Cyrenaica, a man of priestly family and a servant of the Lord, is come, and would shew both his credentials and himself, that he which is highest may see whether he be not worthy of admittance unto the priesthood."

Then took the keeper of the door Samson into a little private chamber of the Temple, and said unto him: "Stand and wait."

There awaited Samson many hours, till he feared, on a time, that the great High Priest would never come to him.

But now he heard a quiet, stately step in a nearby corridor. It paused for a moment, hesitant at the door of the little room, and then—Samson saw before him the great High Priest of Jerusalem.

His heart fluttered, and his knees became as water. His head turned round and round, for that now was come the moment unto which he had so long looked forward, and which he had seen so often in delightful dreams.

The High Priest went up upon a dais, which was hedged about with snow-white marble railing. A tall, a lean, a very stately man, with high, white, ample head and face, all dignity and love—yet,

behind the sweet benevolence, an unyielding pride, an inexorable austerity.

The High Priest sate him down on a throne of gold and ivory, which was uplift on the dais, and, taking in his hands a sheaf of parchments, began to peruse them. But after a time he laid these parchments down, and, lifting up his eyes on high, repeated the Shema. When he had done this, then, for a very long time, he sate absorbed in lofty contemplation, his hard-set features frozen (as it seemed to him that waited) in an eternal and uninterruptible repose.

Then would Samson have slipped forth out of the room, for he was throbbing of heart, but the High Priest at length beheld him, and, smiling with a certain sweetness, said unto him: "I crave thy forgiveness: I had completely forgotten thee."

Then Samson of Cyrene could look no more for gladness, but cast down his eyes. And yet he was not, of custom, a fearful man.

"Thou art come from Cyrenaica, and thy name is Solomon and Samson."

"My name is Solomon and Samson, and out of the distant folds of Cyrenaica come I."

"And thou wouldst have admission unto the priesthood?"

"Unto the priesthood, Father, would I have admission."

"Thy body—it is free from blemish?"

"It is wholly without blemish."

"Let me behold thy genealogy, thy credentials."

Then slipped Samson-Solomon his trembling fingers up about his neck, fearing that now, at length, the locket would surely be gone. But behold it was present, and he had it firmly in his strong fingers. But ere he had loosed it from around his neck, the High Priest said to him—

"Thou art of Levi?"

"Of Levi."

"And the family of Aaron?"

"The family of Aaron, O Father."

"And thy course?"

"The course of Jedaiah."

Then said Annas, "Thou art truly of the same great course as I." He smiled most delicately upon Samson. "The course of Jedaiah, O my son, as thou must know, is of the house of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak."

"I know, O my father, that that is true. I do surely know it."

But, for all of Samson's great pulling, would neither the locket come from off the chain, nor yet the chain from around his neck.

And the High Priest offered not to help him, but sate with his fine, dry smile, upon his lofty throne of gold and ivory, one patient hand reached out— "My son," said he, at length, "I must hasten to take this into the Hall of Polished Stones, where sits the Sanhedrim. Wilt thou not reach to me the locket?"

Thereupon Samson gave a mighty pull, and the chain brake, and he reached out hastily a hand that was all trembling for sheer joy and with happiness at the thought of what Leah, who was also Berith and Amahnah, Enooth and Machashebethel, would say, when that her husband had become a priest accepted in the great Hall of Polished Stones. And he handed the locket to the High Priest.

And the outstretched hand—a slim, old, tapering, august and imperious hand—opened and then closed upon the locket. The hand carried the locket nearer unto the aristocratic eyes.

So smote the knees of Samson one against the other, and his heart beat fast, and his neck trembled and his back bowed low, and all his soul was filled with awe and joy, and yet with great fear also, because of the trial which now was come upon him. "A priest, a priest, a priest!" he shouted in his heart steadfastly, "a priest in the Temple of the Lord God, even El-Shaddai, a priest unto Jehovah, and for all this world!"

And he was not, for a certain time, able, by any manner of means, to look up higher than the High Priest's lean, imperious hand. Yet, when he could look up higher, he saw that the wonderful eyes were gazing upon the locket with a strange and curious steadfastness. Therefore Simon could no longer contain himself, but cried aloud: "Open, O Father, and show to mine eyes both the parchment and the pearls!"

But the High Priest said unto him, with confidence: "Be not afraid. The pearls that are in the locket, my son, they are wholly invisible, save to El-Shaddai, the Lord. Thou art not to blame for thy failure of understanding, but the pearls are metaphorical only. By 'pearls' we mean the authentication of a perfect body, perfect soul, and perfect spirit—which three things (in addition to his genealogy) a priest to Jehovah must surely show. Chiefly we care about the genealogy."

He took and opened the locket, very well understanding the secret of its spring.

And he removed the parchment, and scanned it again and yet again, while his brows grew darker and darker, and his small eyes blazed with sacred lightnings.

He looked for a time at Samson-Solomon most earnestly. Once

again the young priest could no longer contain, but brake forth in an inarticulate cry. Said he, hoarsely whispering: "My locket! Give me back my locket!"

The High Priest said, "Follow me into the Hall of Polished Stones."

Then followed him Samson of Cyrene into the Hall, and before the Sanhedrim, and was like unto a drunken man for swaying.

And the High Priest passed the locket round about the members of the great court, as these did sit in judgment. And they each and all did gaze upon the parchment, and none did speak. The locket was handed back unto Annas.

Who thereupon took it, and flung it against the pavement at the young man's feet, shouting: "Jestest thou so with the High Priest? Thou art not Samson-Solomon of Cyrene, but Simon of anywhere and nowhere; for thy favors they go to shameless harlots and idolatry."

Samson gave a cry and rushed to save his locket. Taking it up, said he to the Sanhedrim: "Is there not in this court one single judge that will hear me? For see! there is surely some mistake. The Chazzan at Cyrene did certainly give unto my keeping this locket. Nay, he did fasten the very chain about my neck. Said he to me then, 'Thou art one of the Lord's priests; for behold thou comest of the tribe of Levi, the family of Aaron, and the course of Jedaiah—art therefore also of the family of him that is High Priest in Jerusalem. I beg of you, therefore, O judges, that ye will not thus summarily dismiss me, but look with kindness and with patience yet a little further into these my claims."

Then one that was in the court, that was kinder than any of the others, said unto him: "Hast thou not thyself at some time looked into this locket?"

"Never, O Father. Never have I so much as touched the secret spring."

"Hast thou, then, not some time lent thy locket out?"

"Nay, nor would ever think of doing so."

"Hast thou not, then, at any time, let some other hand than thine intermeddle with this, the spring of its opening?"

"By no means, Father; oh by no means." Then said he, trembling and in a great chill: "By benevolent wile the Rabbi Azrikam once saved it for me, O Father, taking it from my bosom and wearing it on his own, till I, a wanderer, did return from being with a strange and subtile woman."

Then once again he could contain no more, but brake forth, spite

of his wishes, into a grievous lamentation: "My pearls! My pearls! My title to the priesthood!"

Said the man that was kinder than any of the others: "Let be thy pearls, fellow: thou hast no genealogy.—Whom hast thou married?"

"Amahnah, the Child of God."

"Knowest thou what a 'child of God' is?"

"Yea—a foundling."

"Very true. And so, even if thou thyself didst ever come into the priesthood, even then thy children could not so do, for the blood of their mother would be unknown to us."

"But Betah—her genealogy—he must have known—he insisted that I marry her—he knew many things—he must have known—this Betah—"

"Call thou not upon Betah, for I have spoken."

But Simon prayed them, and supplicated them that they would not be overharsh with him. "As for myself," said he, "it may happen that I shall be able to set you forth my genealogy in some other way. There may be copies of these things. Is not there here a copy, here in Jerusalem? It was once said unto me— Is there not a copy even here, in this very Temple—perchance both of mine own genealogy and of her that lieth in my bosom? Betah must have sent— There must be many secrets—"

But the High Priest: "I speak as official Israel, and I do hereby declare unto thee that I am indeed glad of this excuse to be rid of thee forever, thou who art humble and ignorant and unknown. We have not thy genealogy. Believest thou that such as we could, in any case, consort— But get hence! I have sober business!"

And attendants took the man, and clad him (as the custom was with all that had failed to establish a claim which they had made unto the priesthood) wholly in black. Then led they him forth, and cast him from the Temple.

And he ran across the bridge of glory which spanned the Tyropœan, crying: "Woe is me, oh woe is me!" And went without the walls into the valley of Gehenna,[1] where the filth of the city was daily gathered, and by firemen consumed.

Now the night had come, and all the valley was filled with red fires and great smoke, so that Samson thought: "It is no marvel they make this place a symbol of hell, and that they call the habitations of the damned 'Gehenna.'" And he saw the firemen, how they

[1] Or "Gehinnom."

forked up the filth and placed it on the piles for burning. One of them came unto him, and said in jest: "Art thou also a portion of the filth, O soul in a black garment, and wilt thou be consumed?" Samson had no heart to smite the man, or yet to revile him, but answered: "Yea, I am filth, for I, a priest of Israel, have been rejected by the High Priest and by the Sanhedrim also. Oh woe is me, is me, is me!"

And he fled to the other wall of the valley, while they that attended the burning cast piles of filth both upon him and after him, and howled their derision. Still he smote them not, but went by the way of the plain of the Rephaim, and fetching a compass round about Migdal Eder, attained to Bethlehem and his home.

CHAPTER XXIII

O Little Palestinian House!

Now when first he beheld again Amahnah, Samson could not speak, but only took out his locket from his scrip and gazed upon it ruefully. Then he saw that his rightful name (as he was led to believe) was Simon. And so it was that he came to the later name, that name which he bore forever thereafter, until in his mind sometimes arose a feeling that he had borne it for all time.

But, after he had doffed his garment of rejection, and had burned it, then spake he to Amahnah, and without restraint, of all those things which had fortuned unto him, since, before high day, he had set out for Jerusalem.

Said Amahnah, "Be not downcast, neither heavy at all of heart. Thou hast not lost the priesthood, but only the showing of the title thereof, thy right to claim it. He that did reject thee is not of spiritual, but only official, Israel. But speak unto Parush: have him get thee the attendance of the sheep which are meant for the Temple sacrifices, and which feed round Migdal Eder. For this humble office thou art not any wise disqualified. We shall yet be happy."

Said Simon, "I have not indeed lost all. As thou sayest, I am still truly a priest. And thee, my Purpose of God, I still have by me. I will do even as thou dost say, and talk with Parush."

So, on the morrow, Simon went up to Jerusalem again, and saw Parush, and besought him that he, even Simon, the Rejected, might be made a shepherd of the Temple sheep which flocked round Migdal Eder. Parush spake to them that had the supervision of this matter,

and, as Simon wished, so it was done. But Parush said to him, "Apt as thou art in the study of the Law, it were better thou leftest the herding of sheep to others, and came up unto the City and dwelt beside me, that I might instruct thee. Better it is to be a Pharisee and a Rabbi than even a Sadducee and a priest. For lo! in all this world and that which is to come, there is nothing that is equal unto the Law. And who is like to the teachers of the Law? There is one of the sayings which saith that a rabbi is to be believed, even should he declare that the right hand is the left or the left hand the right. Each and every scribe (that is, one that is learned in the Law) outweigheth all the common people of the world combined. God himself (for one ensample) loveth to do me honor, and my praises are proclaimed each day in heaven by the angels. Come thou, therefore, and be with me as a Talmid."

But Simon's heart was set upon the sheep, and he went back unto Bethlehem, and became a shepherd of the flocks which herd round Migdal Eder.

On a certain evening, when all the sheep had been gathered and counted at a well-filled brook, and Simon of Cyrene spake at ease with many other shepherds, then fell these to discoursing about the Moches (tax-farmers) and the Gabbai (tax-gatherers). "Accursed be Cæsarea," exclaimed one of the group.

"Yea, thrice over accursed," said an older, he they called Gheburah. "See what now they levy on us, these Romans. From twelve till sixty-five, both bond and free, we pay the Roman head-money, and there is no escape. And all our land must give one tenth its grain, one fifth its wine and fruits. Then there be bridge-money and road-money, gate-money also, and taxes on every caravan, a special tax on sheep, taxes on all who come into the Land and all who go out therefrom, and even harbor-taxes thitherward at Joppa. Of old it was counted a great sin for to number the people, but our Roman conquerors, behold they do number us in the Land continually. And why? Only to rob us of everything."

"Woe is Canaan," cried another shepherd, hard by.

"Woe is Palestine," another, far away.

"Ye may well say 'Woe,'" went on Gheburah. "For not only are we robbed, but here is a fearsome question which even the Scribes ask, and yet— Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar?"

He had lowered his voice, and was now looking carefully about. All the other shepherds too, holding their hands above their eyes, looked over the meadows to the hills.

Said Simon, warily: "Cæsar, I understand, hath great jealousy

of his headship over this world, and none among us in the Land durst try to answer such a question. Let us therefore leave it as a riddle that cannot be interpreted, for even the hills hereby have ears and the rocks may find voices."

"Thou hast caught it in the crook," answered Gheburah. He spake even lower, as he said: "But hearken, and I will tell thee what I myself beheld three days ago, when I had taken the first flock of the year to the Temple, and had come back over the Tyropœan bridge. There was a man in the Street of the Coppersmiths, that took a rabbi by the throat, and said unto him: 'Sirrah, thou hast not yet paid thy poll-tax.' And he dragged him off to prison."

Then spake up a yet elder shepherd, saying: "But what is that? Only yesterday I saw a Jewish widow over Jericho way, which could not pay the taxes on her home. And the soldiers cast her rudely out, crying: 'Thou bitch of a Jewess!' and they scourged her so that she fell and knew nothing.

"A neighbor took her in, and comforted her, and gave her in the charge of his wife—though he himself is but an *am-ha-aret.*"

"Hast thou not heard," put in then Gheburah, "that one—a rabbi from Bethlehem at that—went unto Jerusalem, and protested as against these things."

"And what responded Pilate?" asked the eldest shepherd.

"'Do ye not yourselves consume your widows' houses?' Thus said he. And also, 'Behold the Pharisees among you, love they not the homes of widows and of orphans and of all that are desolate?' "

"What answered the rabbi?"

"He parted his garment and tore his hair, and cast dust on his head, and came away, accursing."

"Was he guilty of these things?"

"He was guilty. Woe is Israel!"

"Woe is Israel indeed!" said Simon, softly. Then, balling his great fists: "Would that Messiah were come."

"Hath He not come?" cried Gheburah, as his eyes brightened, and the lines grew deep and strong about his face.

Simon, seeing that the man's heart was stirred, let his crook fall, and stood over against him, listening.

"Hath He not come?" cried again Gheburah. Then, with the voice of a trumpet: "He hath come!"

An echo arose from the way of Bethlehem, in some or another hill, shouting triumphantly: "He hath come!"

And all the shepherds ceased to speak, looking in turn over Bethlehem way. And a yet more distant echo rejoiced from a hill in the way of Jerusalem, "He hath come."

The silence of the shepherds continued until Gheburah, in a voice of true conviction, declared again to Simon, as if these matters were something which should never be forgot: "He hath come. Yea, He hath come. By the God of Israel, Israel shall be revenged."

Said a yet elder shepherd, "Behold! The sheep stray. They are frightened at thy voice, O Gheburah." And he went off calmly with his crook in the way toward Jerusalem, calling: "Sheep, sheep, sheep! She-e-e-p! Sheep, sheep!"

And here came all the lamblings back, bounding and capering about him with little crisp, loving voices.

Oh the sadness and the affection of those voices!

And Ohab (for such was his name) brought the sheep together at the brook. And he stood in the midst of the sheep, which crowded and bleated all about him.

And Simon noted the difference in the face of Ohab, him that attended the sheep lovingly, and the surly countenance of Gheburah. For over the eyes of Ohab the years had drawn a little mist, a tender veil, behind whose softnesses the old, sweet spirit dreamed, losing itself in God. But when the man awakened and became more attentive unto his surroundings, then the mists of the body cleared away, the eyes grew brightly tremulous, like twin stars, and the inward life of holy communion shone out plainly unto the world. But Gheburah had all the time brightly observant eyes. And he guarded the sheep more closely than did Ohab, yet not by any means better. For behold! even the old rams loved Ohab, and the tiny lamblets skipped and danced not only when he played on pipes or tabret, but even at the sound of his voice.

And now the sheep were gathered all about Ohab.

And one that was called Ivveleth (or "Levity") a far younger shepherd, said to Ohab: "Would, O Ohab, that I loved these little creatures as thou dost. But how sad are the voices of the sheep! It liketh me not, a shepherd's life; there is in it no gayety. The wide wilderness is sad, and sadder the weary waste beyond it—sad, sad. And the sound of the winds as they speak in the tree-tops and the grasses, it also is sad. Yet I know not what, in any other calling, I should be able to do. So I stay a shepherd."

And, at this, Gheburah seeing that one of the sheep did nibble at another's ears and caused that they should bleed, gave a loud, fierce cry, and hurled his crook among the sheep.

And they fled panic-stricken, some in one way, some in another.

Until the gentle Ohab, calling, calling, still from the same very

spot where he had stood in the midst of them, began to gather the sheep together again.

But Ivveleth, restless and full of antic follies, ran out after the sheep, attempting to chase them in with comical sweeps of the arms.

And the sheep ran faster and faster.

And coming at length to the top of a hill, where a great rock was, a wolf shot out from the shadow of the rock and seized a lambling with its teeth and made away.

Then tears came into the eyes of Ohab. He placed his little pipes to his lips and played softly.

And the sheep that were left, after a time of running again, came back to the place whereon the gentle shepherd stood.

And Ohab entered the sheep into the fold, making fast the door.

And, on another day, while the shepherds watched their flocks, Simon said to Gheburah: "Thou saidst, not very long ago, that Messiah had come. Hath He come, or wast thou jesting?"

Said Gheburah: "I jested not, for these mine eyes did see Him. But may those orbs be forever accursed that I have seen Him not again. Oh, all my life is bitterness that I have seen Him—seen Jehovah and seen Him not again with javelin and sword."

He stood for a very long time, looking in the way of Jerusalem. Then his eyes softened, and he said to Ohab: "But thou, O Ohab, thou hast also seen, and yet art not bitter. Say therefore unto Simon the story. May he not be bitter when he hath heard it."

Looked Ohab (whose name meaneth "Love," but "Gheburah" "Force," or "Violence") in the way toward Bethlehem. And the mist that was often in his eyes cleared away. He said in a low, sweet, considering tone: "We were here among the sheep, Gheburah, Ivveleth and also I. The night was very sweet and still. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon us, and the glory of the Lord shone round about us: and we were sore afraid. And the angel said unto us, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from us into heaven, that Ivveleth, Gheburah and I, said each unto each, 'Let us go now unto Bethlehem, and behold the child.'

"And we came with haste, and found a woman, Mary, and her

husband, Joseph, which had come to the city of David for to be taxed. And their babe was lying in a manger.

"And when we had seen the child, we told abroad all those things which the angel had declared unto us. And all that heard did marvel greatly. We returned therefore, glorifying and praising God for all the things that we had heard and seen, as it was told unto us.

"And lo! on another day there came wise men from the East, which were guided by a star, and which had passed by the way of Jerusalem. And seeing the young child with His mother, they fell down and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts, gold, and frankincense and myrrh."

Simon of Cyrene, pondering these matters, thought: "Shall I see thee yet, Adonai, and in the flesh?" After a time: "Nay, little babe, thou wast too humble, I fear." He recalled his own rejection at the hands of Annas, the High Priest. "The High Priest said," quoth Simon, as he recollected, "I am indeed glad of this for an excuse—that thou has lost thy genealogy. For thou art humble, humble and very unknown."

Then said Simon to Gheburah, "Thinkest thou truly that this could have been Messiah?"

Gheburah answered and said unto him, "I sometimes believe and sometimes not. For that was many, many years ago, and, as yet, I have seen no sword."

And Amahnah and Simon went, each Sabbath, with phylacteries on their arms and foreheads, unto the little synagogue in Bethlehem. It stood in the highest quarter of the town, where two ways met, and, rising from its roof, a golden pole. Round the building was a porch of slender Ionic columns, to show (together with the pole) that the place was a house of teaching and of prayer.

Over the door of the entrance were a seven-branched candlestick and a pot of manna, lightly cut in the lintel-stone. And the proselytes might not go in, but hung about the door within the porch.

And when they twain had entered into the synagogue, then were Simon and his "Covenant" made separate and apart, each from each. For behold! Amahnah was constrained to enter the court for women, which was boarded off and set to itself with lattices, but into the court of the men went Simon. And the heads of all the men were covered. But both the women and the men, as they sate, did face Jerusalem. And the floor was strewn with mint for a purification and a sweet smell.

Now at the opposite end of the room was a platform, or bima, and at the edge thereof which was nearest to the congregation, a

reading desk, or migdal ez. Behind this desk the reader stood and read, while the preacher ever sate beside him.

At the back part of the bima hung the veil, above it, the ever-burning lamp. Nearby was the eight-branched candlestick, and, back of the veil, the ark, wherefrom the Chazzan, at the proper time, got out the great rolls of the Law, presenting them to the readers.

Betwixt the bima and the common portion of the congregation were "the chief seats" of the synagogue, whereon the rulers of the synagogue—rabbis, Pharisees, men of might and majesty—sate, facing, with sternness and appropriate repose, the am-ha-arets, or commoner portion of the people.

How often did Simon of Cyrene sit in that commoner portion of the congregation, wailing his own deep ignorance of the Law—wholly resolving that, come what might, he would, on a day, get him a place among the Pharisees, a "chief seat in the synagogue!" But first of all, a knowledge of the Law! Why should he try to remain a Sadducee? His priesthood was a jibe, a jest. Yet he stayed for long, at heart, a Sadducee and a priest. His soul was more in the Temple than in the synagogue.

But how were the synagogue services not impressed and stamped on the mind of Simon of Cyrene, so that, in after years, when they were for him only things of the long gone past, the Sabbath program of that village house of prayer would come up into his mind, would not be wholly neglected!

First arose from among "the chief seats" some important reader, and went up on the bima. There, standing behind the migdal ez, he pronounced an opening prayer. Then he recited the Shema, and having gone and stood before the ark, he led in prayers a while (pronouncing the eighteen eulogies, the "tephillah"). Then the Chazzan pulled aside the veil, and, lifting the lid of the ark and taking up one of the parchments of the Law, delivered it to the reader for to read.

And the reader, whenas he had returned to the lectern, read the lesson of the day. And the lesson was in Hebrew. Therefore, beside him stood the meturgeman, the interpreter, turning the Hebrew into Aramaic, either phrase by phrase or sentence by sentence. And often as many as seven of them that had sate in "the chief seats of the synagogue" would go up behind the lectern, and, in turn, read.

Then the preacher, the "darshan," sitting, prosed away for hours, and "taught" the people.

And sometimes did Simon listen eagerly, and again he slipt down

into his bench and peacefully slept in the sight of all men, including the rulers of the synagogue.

So was it twice on every Sabbath, and once on Monday and on Wednesday. And Simon and Amahnah went back, each time, together, unto their own dear home.

O little home at Bethlehem, happy Bethlehem! Little nest of love and joy and peace, where season after season, for a time, brought only well-loved changes! Yet Simon longed for greater and ever greater learning in the Law—though yet, in his heart, he remained a priest and Sadducee.

CHAPTER XXIV

A Pupil of Parush, the Peculiar

Amahnah bore unto Simon twins.

On a day, said Simon to his wife: "I will name these children 'Rufus' and 'Alexander.' "

"But those names be Latin and Greek," said she.

"What, then, am I?" he answered, "Pharisee or Sadducee?" (Whereby it would appear that Simon was still a Sadducee—for the Sadducees were friendly unto the Greeks, also, in a way, to the Latins—though not unto Roman rule.)

"Thou *shouldst* be of spiritual Israel, dear husband, neither officialist nor formalist. Take, therefore, the names of thy children out of the old Hebrew, the language of Jehovah. Let the names be 'Simkah' and 'Gheel,' 'Cheerfulness' and 'Joy.' For behold have I not brought unto thee both Joy and Cheerfulness?"

"Thou hast indeed," said Simon, and kissed her tenderly. "Yet, O Amahnah, my heart is set on this thing. I will name my children Rufus and Alexander."

Amahnah wept. But she said, at length: "In any case, I should be, in part, satisfied. For 'Rufus' is 'Red.' And red is the color, not only of sin and of blood, but also of self-sacrifice and joy. And 'Alexander,' it meaneth 'A Helper of Men.' And what is cheerfulness indeed but man's greatest helper here on earth?"

So the children were called, as the husband would, "Rufus" and "Alexander."

But ever, in the secret heart of Amahnah, they were "Joy" and "Cheerfulness."

Now, as Rufus and Alexander the children throve mightily with all the months and years. And Simon's heart was full of gladness

and gratitude unto God for his two sweet sons. He sang the whole day long among the sheep at Migdal Eder. Then, by night, pillowed in the bosom of his family, he slept, and, like Jacob-Israel of old, dreamed often of angels and God. But Amahnah was sometimes gently sorrowful (being more prophetic in her nature than even her God-filled husband was), and, when Simon saith unto her, "Why dost thou grieve, my little Rose of Sharon?" then saith she, "O my Lion and my Strength, I grieve over naught, being fond and foolish, and thou wilt be sore angry with me. But ever I have a feeling of unspeakable disaster that is yet to come upon us. I am much afeard, O Husband, I am much afeard."

He kissed away her dim forebodings, and, taking his shepherd's pipe in hand, played. Then danced Amahnah, and both her children with her.

And when he had finished, said Simon: "I am glad that thou dost wear thy raiment ever in blue."

"And why, O my Tower?"

"Is not blue the color of the covenant? And thou, art thou not my covenant? even as thy name doth signify?"

And she, seeing the look upon his face, ran unto him, and kissed him yet again, and was very glad because of all these simple things.

And they put their children to the village school in the synagogue, under the guidance of the gray-beard Chazzan of Bethlehem.

And Simon said unto the Chazzan, "Teach my boys, I pray thee, all the little rules thou knowest about the Law. Show unto them the hedge which is round the Scripture." But Amahnah said unto him, "Teach our boys at least the love of the Lord and of justice and truth."

And the children grew not merely in stature, but also in understanding, so that, on a day, Amahnah said unto her husband: "Our sons, are they not far more like unto me than unto thee? Are they not of my bone much more than of thine, and also of my blood? Have not I suckled them hourly, the which thou hast never done and couldst not?" Yet, at another time, said she: "Our sons, are they not of thee alone, and show they not thy two great sides—both commerce and the Law?"

He laughed at her foolish thought. "I have," saith he, "no side for bartering, but am wholly of the Temple and the synagogue—the priesthood and the Law, and also" (here he kissed her) "wholly thy husband and my dear children's father."

But she would not have it thus. "I have seen thy trading in thee these several years," saith she, "though thou dost ever seek to cloak

that part of thee down out of sight both of me and of all men. Each time, when thou dost return from Jerusalem, hast thou (tell me) more or less than thou didst go with hence? And have we not our home and yet three other homes?—But the children! Rufus—the Lord be merciful unto him—he is all for business, even as is the part of thee whereof I speak. And Alexander, he is altogether for the Law, even as is another part of one I know. Hast thou not heard the Chazzan declare he hath never beheld a child that seeth into the Law so deeply? And all that the child acquireth he remembereth. But Rufus, he learneth nothing at all, save only the computations. And I have noticed of a morning when he setteth out for school, that he hath, by way of custom, just one fig together with two clay camels. Yet see! When he returneth at the close of day, he hath two figs and a whole caravan. And he hath eaten several figs. Ah Simon! thy children do illuminate the several sides of thee."

And Amahnah, with her marble face and violet eyes and long silken lashes and her bright robe of deep sky blue, was more than ever as a priceless gem in the eyes of Simon of Cyrene.

At least until she saith, "O husband, Simon, hast thou never noticed also that thy children have thy night-black eyes, with all their unspeakable sadness both of things that are gone and things that are yet to come—and the latter by far the more numerous and more plain to be looked at?"

Whereat Simon would say, with a little anger: "Let be. We are happy; there shall come no changes. Wilt thou turn foolish, and become a melancholy prophetess?"

And he would call his children unto him, and question them fully, as about the Abodah Sarah, saying (for the ensample of a single afternoon):

"Thou, Rufus, answer me straight. How many be the Sedarim of the oral law?"

"Six."

"It is true. Give me their names."

"Nay, Father, that cannot I."

But Alexander gave them.

Then said Simon, "Thou, Rufus, once again. What are the titles of the Seder Moed?"

"Nay, I know them not, O Father."

But Alexander gave them quickly, and modestly withal and in a low tone.

Then quoth the father, "Here is a blessed question, Rufus, which

I know thou canst answer. What are the titles of the Seder Neskin?"

Then arose Rufus from the place where he had been arranging a long, well-laden caravan of clay camels, and came and placed his hands upon his father's knees, and looked into his eyes earnestly. "That," said he, "is the book on Damages, and I do know it by heart. And these are the titles of that book, O Father. 'The First Gate' (so-called because the law is often administered in the gateway of a city). 'The Middle Gate,' which treats of the laws of tenant and of landlord, of letting out to hire, of trusts, of usury—of which I intend to have much."

"Son, Son! Art thou not a good Jew, O Son?"

"For that very reason, O Father, do I intend this thing. A Jew hath not the power of the sword—so saith the Chazzan. I, then, mean to have full power of usury and of wealth, and for this very reason, indeed, that I am a Jew."

Now there was something in the answer which, strangely enough, did not wholly displeasure Simon of Cyrene. Simon pondered a little on this thing. Then quoth he, "Dost thou not know that the Sopherim declare 'The usurer biteth a piece off from a man, for he takes from him that which he hath not given him'?"

"Then, at least, O Father, I will be a merchant. Grant me that, and let me go back to my caravan."

"Knowest thou not, O red-head son, that the Sopherim declare, 'Wisdom is not beyond the sea'—that is, that it is not to be found among traders or among merchants, but only among scholars?"

"Let my brother, Alexander, be a scholar, if he will," replied Rufus testily.—"And title three is 'The Last Gate.' It treateth of the laws of commerce and co-partnership, of buying and selling, of the law of inheritance and the right of succession. Tell me, O my Father, was not I born before my brother, Alexander?"

"Nay, my son," quoth Simon, shaking his head in fondest reminiscence, "but thy brother was born before thee. A thread was placed about his wrist, for that we might not later be mistaken."

Then said Rufus, with an air of great justice: "I believe that all inheritances should be divided among brothers evenly. Why should a man have a double portion of his father's estate, only for this that first he did enter the world? Is there merit in his doing so? Answer me, my Father. Nay, there is not any merit therein at all.—And the fourth of the titles is 'The Sanhedrim.' The fifth is 'Stripes.' 'Oaths' is the sixth. The seventh is 'Evidences.' The remaining

three are 'The Fathers,' 'Punishment' and—I believe—'Idolatry'."

"What is the name of the Massikha on 'Idolatry'?"

"I know not."

"Alexander."

"Abodah Sarah."

"Give me the first of the Mishnayoth that come in Abodah Sarah."

"Three days before the feasts of idolaters it is not permitted to transact business with them, to lend to them, or to borrow from them, either to make a loan of money to them or to borrow money from them, to repay them or even to take payment from them."

Then went Alexander, he of the Greekish countenance and the thoughtful ways, into a long, rambling Gemara on the simple, straightforward Mishna. But Rufus, he of the Roman features and the reddish head, drifted back to his straining camels and thrice profitable barterings. And his caravan of clay was miles and miles into the imaginary desert which ran before his father's doorway, or ere the studious Alexander had finished the first Gemara on Idols.

"And you, the dear children of my heart," said then Simon of Cyrene, "will ye not promise me, both of you, that never, so long as life shall bubble in your veins, will ye stoop to commit idolatry?"

"I promise," said stoutly Alexander. "And I will keep from idolatry by a thorough knowledge of the Law. I will hedge me about, even as Parush in Jerusalem is hedged about, with the high protection of both the first and second Law. But the greater of these is the second, for it stands not written."

"And I," said Rufus, a camel in his hand, "I will keep my thoughts too busy with my caravans and my profits for to let into my mind one single little thought about idolatry. I will worship money: there shall be for me therefore no graven image possible."

"And I," said Alexander, more earnestly still, "I will worship the Law. If thou shalt worship caravans, then I will worship the Law."

And Simon marveled that he could not find it in his heart to rebuke any further the little Rufus. As for Alexander, he doted on him, and marveled not that he could not anywise rebuke him.

So he said to each of his children, only: "My children, do ye love me?"

They said, "We do love thee, Father. And if ever a fierce misfortune should come upon thee, we could not endure it, but should surely die."

Oh delicious words of tenderness! And happy, happy hours spent with Leah and the little children! Simon never forgot those moments,

the gigantic Simon of Cyrene, but kept them treasured in his ever-busy heart, in fact recalled them long years afterward, when life was such a heavy burden, such an unspeakable contamination, as the Samson-Solomon of old could never have conceived even in his most prophetic dreams.

But hear now Rufus, whose hands are never at rest, and whose tongue is like the clacking of a tread-mill, as he saith in a certain hour: "Come, Daddy! Come, thou and Alexander! We have not yet played together on this day."

But Amahnah, entering at the precise moment, laid heavy charge against a son of the house. Rufus, as it appeared, had scored and scissored a volume of the Scripture (no less crime at all than that) into strips of striding camels, which, then, he had fastened with acacia-juice to the back wall of the house. Should he not indeed be punished with stripes?

There was a cloud on Simon's brow, dull thunder in his voice.

"The Scripture! The Law, the Prophets? Hast thou—my Son—The rod! Reach it me, Amahnah!"

But the elder brother, running quickly up, cast himself on his knees. "O Father dear, not on *him,* for he is weaker by far than I. But I am the elder, and also much the stronger, and the broader and the taller and the more enduring, and I will gladly take the rod unto my own back, and Rufus shall be ashamed that I am being punished for him, and will no more make an injury to the Prophets. And I will gladly do this thing for Rufus, because I love my brother so dearly."

Saith Simon, "Is *that* in accordance with the Law?"

"Nay," said Alexander. "It is not in accordance with the Law. But I love my brother, and fain would bear his stripes for him."

Simon strook him with the rod gently, and Rufus cried out and came unto his brother and unto his father, and the three were reconciled.

"Promise me, my children," commanded the father, "that ye will never be unkind hereafter, either each to each or yet unto any men at all upon this earth—unless indeed it be some enemy of the Land—in especial the Romans."

And the children promised, and straightway (being children) did forget. But the father, ere he went back into the sheepfields, thought long on many things which he knew he was nowise able to find in the Law.

And Simon went into the sheepfields which lie round Migdal Eder, singing (from the Scriptures) as he went:

"Blessed thou art, and it shall be well with thee.
Thy wife in the chambers of thy house, shall be as the fruitful vine;
Thy children round about thy table, as the plants of the olive.
Behold, even thus shall be blessed
The man that feareth the Lord;
The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion,
And thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.
And thou shalt see thy children's children.
Peace be upon Israel."

But hardly had he sung this when a Roman soldier, darting round a rock, stood up before him, commanding: "Give me all thou hast. Else thou shalt indeed have peace."

And when the Jew gave not, but cursed, then smote him the soldier upon his right cheek. And Simon smote back, and the man lay as dead.

And when the Jew knelt beside him, the man whispered: "Oh woe is my wife and child!" And the life went out of him.

Uprose a tumult in Simon's heart. He said, "I might have restrained this man, and not have killed him either, albeit he was a Roman. Now his family shall suffer, and I have the mark of Cain."

But he went and found a secret place. And there he buried the soldier. He thought, "In the night the wolves will come and the jackals, and all the vultures that wing the air, and these will devour the man that not one jot shall be left to tell my tale."

As he neared the sheepfields, he heard the little bells upon the sheep, and smelt the new-cropped grasses, and heard again the sweet words of Ohab: "Sheep, sheep, sheep! She-e-e-e-p! Sheep, sheep!" And the lambs bleated, and Simon knew that they loved the gentle shepherd.

And he went on into the sheepfields, and both Gheburah and Ohab came unto him, crying: "The Christ! Messiah! Again the Christ!"

Simon looked from one to the other, saying: "Tell me. How say ye both together (and with nothing else) 'the Christ, again the Christ'?"

"He hath come once more among us," saith Ohab. "Gheburah, here, who hath long been away from us, hath seen Him. He will tell thee. Is it not so, Gheburah? Hast thou not seen Him with thine eyes?"

Simon looked upon Gheburah, and beheld the man transfigured. And Gheburah bowed his head and answered, softly: "The Lord

hath blessed me. I have seen Him times and times again." Simon therefore took from the ground a cudgel, saying: "Let this be Rome!" He brake it easily with his hands. Then took a massive rock. And he smote it with his fist, that the pieces flew in every way. "That too is Rome," said he.

But Gheburah softly rebuked him: "Listen, for thou knowest not my words, what they shall be. Listen, for the truth is not of men, but God.

"Thou knowest that lately I brought the flocks up to the Temple for the sacrifices. Being in Jerusalem, I went into Galilee, and Nazareth—for in that city my sister abideth with her husband.

"In that place, I saw one Jesus. I know Him for the Child to the which we were led by the star.

"But Jesus went into a mountain, and when He was set, He preached to a multitude, and us among the number. But behold! the preacher rebuked those very things on which the world sets highest values. 'Lowlymindedness. That,' said He, 'is blessed; also meekness and deep sorrow, the hungering and the thirsting for righteousness, mercy and purity and the making of peace as between all enemies!' "

"Peace!" laughed Simon. "Said He so? But first, no doubt, a great sword against the Romans."

"And he declared unto His disciples," went on the elder of the shepherds, " 'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' "

"So doth Parush. It is well enough, Gheburah. Say on."

" 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.' "

"Well said again," declared the Cyrenian. "Blessed be the Law. And blessed be all the teachers of the Law. Jesus is a teacher of the Law, likewise Parush. Blessed be they twain. Say on."

" 'Ye have heard,' so quoth Jesus, 'that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.' "

Now it seemed to Simon as if, on a sudden, a great window had been thrown open, a window in the sky, wherethrough he beheld a

heavenly glory. Then he remembered the man he had lately killed. He also remembered Trivialis. Therefore he was silent.

" 'Ye have heard,' " went on Gheburah, still in the words of Jesus, " 'that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' "

Now Ivveleth thought that he saw at a little distance a number of wolves approaching. So he sent off hirelings at a run to go around and about in the way of the wilderness of Judea, thence to fetch a farther compass and so become as a protection unto the sheep. But Gheburah took his little pipe out, and played softly. And all the sheep were running back or ere the men could come up anigh unto them.

"What next said Jesus?" cried out Simon. "I would have a certain sign—a miracle whereby I might surely believe."

"What Jesus next said, I do not remember," saith Gheburah. "But, on many occasions (for I staid long in Galilee, then followed Jesus about) He gave to the people signs and wonders that all might know to a certainty He was Shiloh that was come. And first there was water, which He made into wine. That was at Cana."

"Water—into wine? But this the magi also have done. What else?"

"Yet again, with a few little fishes and only seven loaves of bread, He fed to the full a hungry multitude of five thousand. Yet again He stilled a tempest, and again walked on the fluctuating sea as on a floor of stone. And He healed, from time to time, all manner of sickness: fever, palsy, leprosy, inveterate weakness, an issue of the blood of twelve years' standing, dropsy, blindness, deafness and dumbness—all these."

"But so have each and all the prophets done! yea and Moses also. Gave He not a sign from heaven?"

"The daughter of the ruler of a synagogue was dead. Jesus said unto the people that wept and wailed, 'The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.' And they laughed Him to scorn. But when He had put them all out, He taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked."

Simon got up and went round a lofty rock which stood behind Gheburah. There he outstretched his arms to the right and to the left, as though in prayer. He groaneth, "O Father, I am sorely afeard of idolatry, either in wood or stone or word or beast, or any

kind of flesh whatever. Show me therefore, if thou knowest my soul, a sign, an indisputable sign, from heaven."

Gheburah, thereupon, hearing Simon, calleth unto him: "Jesus himself, He is the surest sign, He and His sayings. Dost thou not know Him, O Samson-Simon of Cyrene, for a sign of truth, or ere thy fleshly eyes have gazed upon His loveliness, or thine ears have hung upon the wonders of His lips?"

But Simon, returning from the rock, said again: "I would have a sign. Then would I go to the place of His speaking, and, if He gave me yet another sign, a sign from heaven—"

But Gheburah of Bethlehem grew wroth (for his ancient use and management were strong upon him) and brake in upon the man. "Thou sayest thou wouldst have a sign from heaven, a celestial phenomenon of glory, a wonder of all wonders that the world might behold and none be able to dispute. But Jesus himself hath spoken, and hearken now what He saith.

"When the Pharisees and the Sadducees had asked Him for celestial signs, then said He unto them, 'When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.' "

And Simon grew each day the less a follower of the Sadducees, and the more inclined to Parush. There was also in his heart a waxing eagerness for knowledge, the which passion he had had from the moment when he first arrived back into the Land of the Lord, after that season of enslavement on the Babylonia. Therefore thought he, on a day: "I yearn too much for a deeper knowledge of the Law, which, of a truth, I never can acquire as a simple shepherd in the fields round Migdal Eder, or as one who sitteth from time to time in the synagogue at Bethlehem." So he said to Amahnah, which is also Leah and Enooth: "Come, let us go forth unto Jerusalem for to dwell there, that, in that place, I may learn the Law more fully."

"From whom," asked she, "wilt thou learn? From Parush?—for I do greatly fear that man."

He said, "Parush is a Pharisee of Pharisees, and there is none that is like unto him in all the perplexities of the Law. And that Law, it will keep us from idolatry, and from all comminglings with Gentiles."

Amahnah wept.

But Simon was inexorable, so that Amahnah at length said, "Whither thou goest—"

Therefore journeyed they twain and the children unto Jerusalem for to dwell there, that Simon might become proficient in the Law, learning at the feet of the Pharisee of Pharisees, even the trumpeting, purse-proud, pore-blind Parush.

There cometh, on a day, to Simon, one that was a very holy man. He had in his hand a myrtle branch, and his face was like the face of Zechariah and of him that came before him and of him that was after him. He saith in a dead, sweet tone: "Thou hast Amahnah with thee now, but yet art thou become a stupid formalist, and thou art also on each day the more race-ridden and the less inclined to be as a light to the Gentiles. Fly, therefore, O thou that mightest have been as a sacred priest unto all nations. Fly from the unholy house of Parush."

Simon saith unto him, "Thou railest as if my teacher were an idolater."

Saith Jehovah-Jireh (for such was his name) "Whether is the worse, To worship a stone or to worship a form?"

And at this the aforetime priest did tear his garments, and rage mightily. He crieth, "What have I to do with thee, O thou whose very name doth mean 'Jehovah will see to it'? For behold the Lord will 'see to it' indeed. He will come in the flesh, and a sword shall be in His hand, and He will smite the heathen mightily, and Jerusalem shall be the center of all the world both for learning and for wealth, and for all magnificence and all power, both of this world and the next."

But Jehovah-Jireh answered and saith unto him, "Blessed is He that shall come in the name of Adonai. But He shall have no sword in His hand. Behold thy King, O Priest that hath been in a sombre garment. He that will save His peoples from their sins approacheth, lowly and riding upon an ass; even upon a colt the foal of an ass.—And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prised at of them.—And at length I will pour upon the rejected priest, even Simon of Cyrene, the spirit of grace and of supplication. He shall look upon me and see me when I am pierced. And he shall look upon me even once again, and so shall be satisfied."

Then cursed Simon, and saith to the prophet: "He that is Lord of Hosts shall not be pierced. In the stead thereof, He will pierce

the Nations. And He shall not come upon an humble ass, but upon a mighty horse of war. Death and destruction shall blow from both the nostrils of that horse. Thou art fool and liar which pretendest to be a prophet and art none."

He cast dust upon the holy man, and beat him, and set his fingers in his own ears, and ran away, even as Jehovah-Jireh calleth after him: "The Lord will see to it indeed. But in sin and in sorrow, in hunger and in thirst, in fear and torture and doubt, the whole of thy lingering days shalt thou be priest unto Him that cometh in the name of Adonai.

"And, in the end, all the nations of the earth (and for this, that thou art His priest) shall be gathered together into one single place against thee. And thou shalt see Messias once more, accompanied by His Bride, the Church, and they shall come in clouds of glory, and the miracle of all miracles shall have been accomplished."

Simon heard, and, "in the end," he did remember.

But, at the present time, Simon did run straight into the ship-captain, Ardelio, whose name, by interpretation, meant Busybody, a Roman and very hard, him whom Simon had taken into hire at Hebron when the priest was still the husband of that harlot, slattern, and idolatress, even Abaddone.

The captain said to Simon, "I am on the traces of Trivialis, but as yet have not found him."

Simon said, "A curse be upon him that hath just roiled me. Hast thou sought diligently?"

Ardelio: "Yea, I have sought with great diligence."

Then asked Simon of himself, "What shall I do?" For he remembered those things which Gheburah had lately told him in the sheepfold, as concerning the gentle teachings of the Nazarene. All at once Simon answered in his heart, "This Trivialis is a Gentile, and knoweth not the Law. Is it fitting that I, a child of Abraham and a pupil of Parush, should have mercy at all on him? What would Parush say? Trivialis is not a Jew. By the gold that is on the Temple, I will have no mercy upon him at all."

He saith, therefore, to the captain: "Here is money. Go on further, and, when thou hast in thy searchings found the fellow I seek, as surely thou wilt do, bring me tidings again. Then will I also go unto him."

Ardelio went his way.

Now it was always esteemed full necessary that any that would be either a student or a teacher of the Law should learn and practice some or another handicraft. For this it was that Parush, though

a man of great riches, was nevertheless a potter and dwelt in the Street of the Potters, and all day long, in the street before his shop, did spatter and mold the clay before him till it was shapen. For this good reason also, Simon of Cyrene settled in the Dyers' Street, which was next to the Street of the Potters. And he became a dyer. And all day long he worked at the window of his shop, with great green, red, blue and yellow threads, passed through the lobes of his ears, that all who went before his shop might know the man to be a dyer.

And his house in the Street of the Dyers, and the house of Parush in the Potters' Street, were adjacent in their rearward courts, each unto each.

And Simon passed over into Parush's house, on every evening excepting only the evening of the Sabbath, and, at the feet of Parush, learned the second Law. With a strange, delirious joy learned he, at the feet of Parush, the Pharisee of Pharisees.

Now there were in Jerusalem ten plain kinds of Pharisees. First were the Nifki, the "Dashers," or the "Bandylegged." These would scarcely lift their feet in walking, but dash them against the cobblestones, so that people might believe the dashers were absorbed in holy meditation. And the second were the "Mortars," which wore a cap about their eyes, that they might not see the common people, or anywise suffer the profundity of their holy meditations to be disturbed by them. The third were the "Bleeders"; they had thorns in their garments all round about the ankles, that the ankles might be pricked thereby, and a thorn be ever in the flesh of the ankles. Then came the "Cryers," who went about the streets and alleys shouting, "Let me know my duty, and I will do it." The fifth were the "Almsgivers," or "Trumpeters." These had a trumpet sounded in the streets, or ere they conferred any alms. The sixth were the "Stumblers," they who, as they went abroad, kept tightly shut their eyes, to this end that they might behold no women. And the seventh were the "Immovables." These stood like statues in the market places, many long, long sacred hours together, at uninterruptible, yea imperturbable, prayers. Then the "Medinkia," or "Pestles," who went bent double like the handle of a pestle. The ninth were the "Shikmi," or "Strong of Shoulder." They went with a shoulder on high, as if the mighty burden of the Law were resting on it. And last were the "Whited Sepulchres," the "Dyed Pharisees," they that hungered after widows' houses, and were lecherous withal.

Parush, alone, was of these kinds all ten. For he would not lift his feet in walking; and, having eyes, he saw not; he kept a deep thorn in the ankle's flesh; he asked his duty in the market places and the

streets; gave alms to the blare of a trumpet; was blindly a leader of the blind; prayed in the sight of men for hours as immovably as granite; did often go around bent like the handle of an enormous pestle; or kept a shoulder high to show that the burden of the Law was resting on it; and, most of all, was lecherous and fond of the houses of the poor.

And Simon of Cyrene was the worshipful pupil of Parush, though he followed not the master in all things.

And often they twain ascended to the house-top of Parush, that, in that place, by the cool of the evening, the Master might instruct his pupil in the Law.

And Parush sat upon a lofty chair, but Simon at his feet on the floor of the house-top. And Simon clasped his mighty hands together, and hung them over Parush's knees, nor did he ever take his eyes from the lips of Parush. And Parush sate with his eyes tight closed, for this, that the tops of all the houses in Jerusalem were fully bridged together, and, in the cool of the evening, much of the people of the city passed by the way of the roofs and not of the streets, and always there were many women going to and fro, in the midst of the multitude, from house-top to house-top. And Parush feared (as he said) that he might behold these women, were his eyes but open, and so be defiled.

He said to Simon (on a certain evening) "How many are the ways of going about Jerusalem?"

"Three. By the house-tops, by the streets, by the subterranean passages which do underly the city."

"It is true. So also are the ways of the learning of the Law. There is the superficial way—the learning accomplished in the synagogues, which is good enough for them that are mostly ignorant and can never be learned. Next is a deeper method—that of learning in an academy, a Beth ha Midrash. Then last is the deepest way of all, whereby the pupil taketh a private teacher, and learneth the doctrines of eternity at his sacred feet.—Art thou ready for another lesson, O my son?"

"Yea, my father. Yea, my prince of light and learning. Yea, my all."

"Let us, then, begin. First I will ask thee, What is the second seder of the oral law?"

"Moed [Festivals], O Father, O Happy Prince."

"It is true. And what are the titles of the Moed?"

"Sabbath, Erubhin, Rosh Hashana, Yuma, Shekalim, Sukkah, Megillah, Taanith, Pesachim, Betzah, Hagigah, and Moed Katem."

"Thou hast remembered. Thou are like a cemented cistern, which loses not a drop of water."

"I thank thee, O my Prince and Lord."

"And now we do begin the learning of the 'Sabbath.' But first I would have thee remember the fourth commandment of the decalogue, for that is the corner stone—let us rather say 'foundation'—of the Massikha called 'Sabbath.' 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath unto the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.' My son, O my son, doth it not appear simple, the fourth commandment of the Law?"

"It doth," said Simon.

"Thou art greatly in error. For who among men could keep a law so general? Need we not an endless multitude of minor laws whereby we shall be enabled to obey this main one? It is true. There must be many little mishnayoth, and on each of the mishnayoth a full and exact gemara."

Then said Simon of Cyrene, suddenly and before he had had time to catch his tongue: "A certain Rabbi Jesus declareth we make the Law a burden to ourselves, and, fearing idolatry, do make an idol of our very forms of law, the which, instead of idols, we worship."

The face of the Rabbi Parush was drawn in a convulsion of anger, and the mouth for a time spake not for the bitterness therein. Then: "Wilt thou, Raca, be accursed?"

Simon looked down quickly, trembled as were he a child. But he answered, "Thy pardon, Lord. I would not have interrupted. I would not— Yet all the world—see—they—the—world—they speak —they are talking of Jesus."

"Fools! Wilt thou become as one of them? Wilt thou also be accursed, outcast, rejected by him who is thy teacher?"

He also said: "Knowest thou not what Jesus hath declared as concerning the very Temple? 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.' He is an impostor."

Simon: "But they who follow Him declare He meaneth, He will be crucified, and three days thereafter, arise from the dead."

But Parush answered and said unto him, "Which is the more

impossible? He meaneth merely that, if He can, He will instigate the multitude to tear our holy Temple down. After that He will not rebuild it. He is a Jew, this Jesus, but more He is like a hateful Gentile."

Simon: "May all of them be accursed forevermore, even for this that they be not sons of Abraham."

Parush answereth, "Let them be accursed indeed.—Although I have had for a time as a pupil (thou hast not seen him) a gigantic Greek called 'Philedonus,' or 'Seeker After Pleasure.' He learneth easily and remembereth much, he likewise looseth gold unstintedly upon my housetop—the which I afterwards find and keep. Yet is he not son of Abraham. Therefore I would thou wouldst not meet him. Moreover, he seemeth to be longing, longing, ever longing for something better than our Law. He is unworthy."

At this there passed over from a neighboring bridge, and upon their very house-top, a Gentile woman which raised her veil, and stopped and looked long at Parush. And behold, her impudent cheeks were stained a bright scarlet, and her eyes were darkened with kohl, and her hair sprinkled with oil and gold powder and perfumed with anise.

Parush mumbled: "This is indeed one of those Gentiles." Yet he looked upon her gladly.

She said to him, "I have a child that starveth in such and such a place. Wilt thou not come and see unto it?"

Parush saith, "There shall be no alms asked of Parush in vain. He will surely come, and that upon this night."

The woman smiled again, and went her way. Then said Parush, "Let us not speak again of the fellow, Christ. He hath come to destroy."

But, at this, there stepped upon the house-top a Jewish widow in poor apparel. She said to Parush, "The officers take my home. They say it is in thy name they take it, and for this, that I have borrowed moneys of thee, and, though I have paid to thee those moneys back, together with a very great usury, yet, of all of the usury which I owed, that have I not paid wholly unto thee. They therefore take my house."

But Parush beat on a gong, and strong men issued from the courts below. As they took the woman away, they smote her and cursed.

Then closed Parush his eyes again, and said, dreamily: "I have tithed my mint and my anise and my cummin, and I give great alms each day in public places. More I cannot do. I swear by the gold

of the Temple and also by the altar of that Temple that more I cannot do.—But the Law! Let us on to the Law."

Simon said unto him, "If thou wilt, O Lord."

Then Parush: "There are twenty-four chapters on the Sabbath, the day thou shalt not labor. But, first of all, we need to know precisely what is 'labor.' Now there are labors that are large and labors that are small. The former kinds of labor are called Aboth (Fathers), because they are the begetters of much other work. And thou shalt count the Fathers up to the number of forty saving one. But each of the Fathers hath Descendants (Toledoth), the lesser labors, which come to existence because of the existence of the Aboth.

"And the Aboth (the fathers of labor) they are these: sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, sifting, grinding, sifting in a sieve, kneading, baking, shearing the wool, washing wool, beating wool, dyeing wool, spinning, putting the yarn upon the weaver's beam, making two thrum threads, weaving two threads, separating two threads, making a knot, undoing a knot, sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches, catching deer, killing, skinning, salting it, preparing its skin, scraping off its hair, cutting it up, writing two letters, scraping in order to write two letters, building, pulling down, extinguishing fire, lighting fire, beating with the hammer, and carrying from one possession into the other.

"But first I will give thee a little outline of 'The Sabbath,' to the end that later thou mayest learn in full, omitting nothing.

"The law of the Sabbath extendeth so as to include the Friday afternoon, though the Sabbath, as thou knowest, beginneth with the night of Friday. But when, now, is it night? Does one star appear? It is still Friday. Two stars? It is between the two days. Three stars? The night hath come, and the Sabbath is truly here. And between the first star and the third the Chazzan of every synagogue goeth up to the roof of a house that is near unto the synagogue, and bloweth six times on his trumpet. At the first of the blasts, all labor ceases in the fields, at the second all the labors in the cities and the towns, at the third the Sabbath lamp is lighted in every house of city, town, and village.

"But now there be full many people who, if caught at labor when the third star appeareth, will shun to lay the work aside, and so cometh sin. Hence there are many mishnayoth about such work as may not be begun of an afternoon on Friday. I give you of these a few, with certain very simple gemara upon them.

"*Mishna.* One shall not sit down of a Friday before the hair-

cutter at the approach of the time for afternoon devotion, before he hath said his prayers. Nor shall he enter a bathroom or a tannery (and the same is true of a factory or any large business), or sit down to eat, or begin to plead a case before a judge. Yet, if he be started on these things, he need not interrupt himself.

"*Gemara.* One should not begin cutting his hair, as a precaution against accident, for his scissors might break; a bath to sweat, lest he grow exhausted; a tannery, lest he notice some damage to his wares and become confused; nor shall he sit down to eat lest the meal be protracted; pleading a case of justice, lest argument be advanced which overthrows all previous argument, and until all this is settled the Min'ha prayer will be forgotten.

"From just what moment does the cutting of the hair commence? From the moment when the barber's cloth is spread above him whose hair is to be removed. Bathing begins at the moment when the coat is taken off; tanning at the moment when the work-apron is tied upon the shoulders; a meal at the moment when the hands are washed. But another rabbi saith, At the moment when the girdle is removed. On a time I will harmonize to thee all such apparent differences. For see, I give thee now, at the first of thy studies of the Sabbath, only a very little at one time. Later, I will give thee more, and so thou shalt not be at any time a-surfeited. But, to go forward to the present—

"*Mishna.* A tailor shall not go out (when it is nearly dark on a Friday) with his needle; for he might forget and go on bearing the needle with him after the Sabbath had begun. Nor shall a scribe go out with his pen, when it is late of a Friday afternoon; nor shall anyone search for vermin then in his garments, or read by the light of a lamp. An instructor, verily, may follow the children as they read, but he himself? he shall not read by the light of a lamp.

"*Gemara.* Does not the Mishna mean, When the tailor's needle is stuck in the garment? Nay, it treateth of the case when the tailor holdeth it in his hand. But the tailor shall not go out with the needle sticking in his garment, if the Sabbath be already come.

"And the following points are also true: A carpenter shall not go out late upon a Friday with his rules behind his ear; nor a cloth cleaner with the spanning cord behind his ear; nor a weaver with the stuffing cotton behind his ear.

"And now I will ask thee a great question, O dyer of many things. Give thou good heed thereto. Shall a dyer go out of a Friday afternoon with his ensamples around his neck?"

Now Simon had often done this thing, being, as yet, imperfect

in the Law, so he said, as one that would uphold his own ways: "He may go."

Then opened Parush two astounded eyes. "He may go! 'He may go,' sayest thou? Thou a dyer, and wouldst also be a Pharisee and scribe? Listen. He may NOT go. If he goeth, he is in deep sin."

Then said Simon of Cyrene, "Thy pardon, Prince and Master. I am still as a little child before thee and before all learned men. Have pity upon mine ignorance, and believe it is only because of my lack of knowledge that here I kneel before thee, for the pleasure, and the love, and the glory of learning at thy sacred feet."

Parush was in some measure mollified. But yet, as he closeth his eyes again, he stroketh them gently with his fingers, and his temples and forehead also, as one that wisheth to declare unto all men, "I suffer, oh, I suffer, from the ignorance of such persons. But may Jehovah strengthen me to endure the suffering."

Said he, after a time: "A man must examine his garments on a Friday evening, or ere it getteth dark, to see whether there is anything in them that must not be carried about upon the Sabbath, for to carry a burden on the Sabbath, that is sore sin. Now, my son, I will ask thee, What *is* a burden?"

"The weight of a dried fig, O Father."

"It is true. But if half a fig be carried on the Sabbath at two different times—is that a desecration of the Sabbath?"

"I know not."

"And yet thou art a son of Israel! On a day I will give thee many lessons on the state of mind, the locality, and likewise many other matters whereon depends the answer to my question.

"But, for the present: One shall not search for vermin in the street, upon a Sabbath, out of self-respect. Neither shall anyone vomit in the street upon a Sabbath, out of self-respect."

Here Parush pondered. Then said he, "When a rabbi telleth a matter of unusual importance, he leaneth toward his pupil and whispereth in an ear." Then leaneth he toward Simon.

And whispered in Simon's ear: "A man who, on a Sabbath, seeking about his garments and finding therein a louse, shall not crack that louse between his nails, but simply rub it with his fingers and cast it then away. This is a spiritual and important admonition."

And Simon bowed his head, and kissed the knee of Parush. For he had not before known these things. And he said, "They will keep me from idolatry—such things."

Said Parush, with a smile, for he saw that he had a willing scholar, "The Mishna saith, One shall not read of a Friday evening by the light of any lamp. And the rule doth hold if the lamp be placed the height of two men from the ground, or of two of the stories of a house, or even of ten large houses, placed one house upon another. Now it also saith, 'One shall not read.' But how about *two,* how about *two?*"

"I know not," Simon confessed.

"*Two* may read," saith Parush, "but only if they read one subject. If two men read two subjects, then they are guilty. But a prominent man may always read by the light of any lamp upon a Friday evening. Now why? Because he never would degrade himself to stir or snuff the wick. He can be trusted.

"*Mishna.* The house of Shamai saith that neither ink nor dye-material nor fodder for any animal, shall be put into water on a Friday, unless there be full time for them to soak completely up or ere the Sabbath hath arrived. There shall be no thing (they say) still soaking on the Sabbath. The house of Hillel lets us do this: it is wrong. And the Beth Shamai also prohibits the putting of bundles of linen thread into an oven there to bleach, unless there be sufficient time left for the bundles to get heated through or ere the Sabbath arrive.

"And now, my son, I will ask thee yet another question. May wool be set in a dye-kettle, if there be not time still left for it to soak up thoroughly before the Sabbath?"

Then answereth Simon, "It may not be done; there must be time for the wool to have finished soaking."

And Parush opened his eyes again, and looked upon the giant kindly. "Thou art a good man," said he, "and deservest further understanding of Jehovah's Law.—Now, traps shall not be set for animals and birds, or nets for fishes, on a Friday, unless there still is time for the animals, the birds, or the fishes to be caught before sunset.

"And further—" Here he leaned and once more whispered, "One shall not sell anything to a Gentile on a Friday, or help him load his animal, or help him shoulder a burden unless it is plain that the Gentile can reach with his load the nearest place before the Sabbath. Neither shall hides be given to a tanner nor clothes to a Gentile washer on a Friday, unless there still shall be time enough for the work to be finished ere the Sabbath. But the presses may be put on grapes and olives in the press-pits as long as it still is day."

Parush straightened up and again closed his eyes. "Let us once

more have Gemara. "If one put flour in a vessel, and another one put water on it, the latter is guilty of the act of kneading. At twilight, of a Sabbath eve, one may make an opening in a spring, so that the water may run into a garden the whole of a Sabbath day. He may also put smoking incense underneath garments, so that they hold the fragrance all a Sabbath day. It is also permitted to set burning sulphur under enameled vessels, so that its smoke shall act upon the paints the whole of a Sabbath day. It is also allowed for one to put a balm on the eye and a plaster on a wound, so that the healing process shall continue throughout the Sabbath. But hold—it is plainly prohibited to put grain into a water-mill, unless there is yet enough daytime left for it to be ground. The reason? Even tools must have their rest.

"Now, thou mayest ask, my son, why, when the resting of tools is obligatory, the Sopherim yet permit the placing of sulphur and incense to smoke and linen thread to bleach upon the Sabbath? The reason: that in these latter cases the tools are practically at rest. But do not traps for animals and birds, and nets that are set for fishes, do not these work? Not at all. Neither the traps nor the nets do work, but only the fish and the animals do work, which insinuate themselves within the nets and traps.

"A woman shall not put dried lentils and peas into an oven late of a Friday afternoon, and leave them there to soften. If she needs them for after the Sabbath, she shall not use them, unless she waits the length of time required to cook the same things from the beginning. Likewise, no baker shall set any vessel containing water into the oven late of a Friday afternoon. If he needeth hot water for the Sabbath, he shall not use this water unless he verily waiteth as long as it would take to boil the water from the beginning.

"One shall not sell a thing to a Gentile, nor lend it to him, nor help him carry it, nor lend him nor present him with money of a Sabbath even, unless there still is time enough for the recipient to reach his house before the night cometh. One, of a Sabbath, may set down on his own grounds food for the use of a Gentile. If the latter take the food and carry it away, the Jew need not hinder him.

"One shall not hire out his tools to a Gentile on a Friday, but he may of a Wednesday or Thursday, although he surely knoweth that the Gentile will use them on the Sabbath. So, too, we may not send a letter by a Gentile on a Friday, but we may on a Wednesday or a Thursday. One shall not send a letter by a Gentile on a Friday, unless it be conditioned that a certain sum shall be paid for the carrying of the message. But even without a condition, a letter may

be sent by a Gentile if the messenger have time enough to reach the house of its delivery or ere the coming of the Sabbath.

"It is said of old: No one shall embark on a vessel less than three days before the Sabbath. But this is only true if the traveller set to sea on private business. If he goeth for a meritorious act, then the rule hath no validity. He may also bargain with the owner of a boat that it shall rest upon a Sabbath, although he know that the owner will not keep his word. To travel from Tyre to Sidon, one may embark even on a Friday.

"Siege shall not be laid to Gentile cities less than three days before a Sabbath. But, once the siege is laid, it need not (because of any Sabbath) be lifted for a time.

"White clothes should be given unto the washer three full days before the Sabbath, but colored clothes even of a Friday, for it is harder to wash white clothes than colored ones.

"Garlic, unripe grapes, and green grain-stalks which were crushed of a Friday, may be set under pressure at sunset, but honeycombs that were crushed on Friday shall not be put in the press at sunset, so that the honey may run out of itself.

"And, once again, a *Mishna.* Meats, onions, and eggs shall not be put to roast of a Sabbath eve, unless they can be done before the Sabbath. Bread shall not be put in the oven or a cake upon live coals, unless the crust can form ere the Sabbath.

"It is written: Ye shall not kindle any fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day. But, in the heating-house of the sanctuary, the fire may be fed at evening, and, in the rural districts, it is lawful to feed till the flames enwrap the greatest portion of the fuel. And it hath been said, When coals have already burned, more fuel may be added, although the Sabbath is quite near.

"*Gemara.* When should such victuals (meat, eggs, and onions) be considered 'done'?"

"I know not," admitted Simon blankly, for his mind had been called to a tumult in the distance.

Then said Parush, "As soon as they are done like the victuals of Ben Drostai."

"And who," said Simon, "was Ben Drostai."

"He was a very great robber. He never could stay in one place long enough to cook a meal. So he cooked each dish one-third as long as any one else would have cooked it. He was a villain, but he knew—"

And now the tumult soared above all the starlit roofs, so that even Parush, ceasing to murmur, opened his eyes wide.

And master and scholar turned, and the sounds increased. People scattered right and left on the various house-tops, and gat them quickly off the bridges. For behold, a pursuit was near at hand—and a great hue and cry, and certain men were leading and others more swiftly followed, being Roman soldiers.

And when the men that fled had come to the house-top of Parush, then cried Simon: "Barabbas! Dysmas! Gestas!"

But Parush had arisen and closed the gates that led to the bridges which drew away from his house-top, also those that led down into his courts.

And they that fled, when they had got upon the roof of Parush, looked over the parapet into the street, and beheld that the distance was much too great that they should leap.

And the soldiers came upon them, and fought them, and, having subdued them, put manacles upon them.

Then Parush opened the gates, and the soldiers took away the thieves.

Asked Parush of Simon, "Dost thou know these men?"

Simon told all he knew concerning them.

Parush: "Barabbas is well named. For behold! the name which he beareth, it doth signify, 'the son of his father.' And he is indeed proud, for that he cometh of a long lineage of thieves, yea and of the cruellest of murderers. But Dysmas and Gestas are much lesser men. They have, for imaginary offenses, taken reprisals even on me myself. Hence, just now, I locked up their way against them. I will tell thee further that Dysmas is a Greek, and he taketh Greek revenges: that is, only because of some offense that hath been done to himself. But Gestas is a Jew, and, though a thief, yet for insults to our Law hath he revenged himself repeatedly. And often, though in secret, I have, for this, caused him to escape Cæsar. Moreover, the Greek doth sooner forget a revenge, but taketh one more bloodily; while Gestas, being a Jew, forgetteth not at all, but is lighter in the thing which he would do when he catcheth his enemy.

"Yet see! the Virgin, Bethulah, whom the Greeks call Athene, and the Romans Virgo. She riseth now above Jehosaphat. May the virgin from whom our Shiloh shall come, be soon in the ascendant, also. Meantime, let us on with the Law, so—to bed.

"And I have finished (in a casual way) the first of the chapters on 'The Sabbath.' The second consisteth of the regulations as about the Sabbath and 'hanukah' lights.

"*Mishna.* What shall and what shall not be used for lighting the Sabbath light? The light shall not be made with wicks of cedar

bast, raw flax, silk fibre, weeds growing upon the water, or ship-moss. Nor shall pitch be used, nor wax, nor cotton-seed oil, oil of rejected heave-offerings, the fat from the tail of sheep, or any kind of tallow."

And so on and on.[1]

Ah Simon, thou God-chosen priest of Cyrene! Little indeed will the problems of space and time, of far-flung matter and the parent of all time which is yclept eternity, be shone upon and illuminated by the dry, dead details of this dull thing called Law. Instead, the very heart of thee will turn ever colder, and the love of Adonai—

But there cometh a knocking on the trap-door of the roof. And Parush, standing, cried out, as was the custom: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Lo, there entered four strange men:—Alukah, the horse-leech, little and lean and sharp of shoulder; dirty and narrow in his forehead; and with small, bright, deeply impenitent eyes: Gannab, the perpetual criminal: Na-aph, the adulterer: Kesee!, the fool.

Parush sate again, and said unto Simon, "See! we have here four men, who are truly Jews and yet are of little resemblance either unto thee or unto me. Whenever I touch them I am contaminate, even as a man feeleth contaminate at the touch of a cross."

He flung the men coppers. They scrambled, and having kissed the feet of Parush, went their ways.

Then arose the Master once again, saying: "The lesson is over; for the Maiden standeth yonder about the ridge of the Hill of Evil Counsel, and all the mazzaroth declare that the night is far spent."

Said Simon, "O Prince, O Master, O Father, I must pay thee yet again."

"Thou never hast paid me," said Parush. "Thou never canst. The Law is free to every man."

"But I have heretofore left upon thy house-top certain moneys. This I again do. Shouldst thou chance to find them—"

Parush's eyes glittered. "What is lost," saith he, "belongeth to the finder.—But, as for this fellow, Jesus, I would say to thee once again, He is of none authority. Sit not we, the scribes and Pharisees, in Moses' seat? And when Messiah truly cometh, He will come with a shout and with a sword in His hand, and all the nations shall fall down before Him. And He will reign in Jerusalem; and the City will be greatly changed. Adamant and rubies and hyacinths

[1] For thousands of other rules, see Rodkinson, "The Babylonian Talmud, English Edition," 10 vols., New York, 1901. The so-called "Babylonian" Talmud was not only more extensive, it was also more highly esteemed than the other, the "Jerusalem," Talmud.

and emeralds will cover the very streets and the housetops, and every gate will be of a single, carven pearl. The City will reach from Joppa to Damascus, and all the buildings run up nine miles into the sky. In those days, at the touch of every wind the white flour will drop from the ripened heads of wheat. From every grape a cask of wine will issue. There shall be neither sickness nor pain. And all the dispersed shall come back to Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be the capital of the world, for Messiah shall be more than Cæsar."

He drew himself to his full height, and turning, looked toward the Temple. "Messiah shall be more than Cæsar!" he shouted, in the voice as it were of an archangel. "Messiah shall be more than Cæsar!" Even Parush was sometimes bold.

Simon grew each day in his knowledge of the Law. And more and more he loved front seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the streets. Many there were who already began to call him "Master" and "Father." He broadened his phylacteries, and lengthened the fringes of his garments—that he might become like Parush. And when he sware, he sware by the Temple (for that was nothing) but never by the gold that was in the Temple (for that would have made him answerable). Also he sware by the altar (which was nothing) but never by the offering that was on the altar (for that would have made him accountable).

And a thousand rules like these, a thousand times ten thousand, he learned from the lips of Parush.

And behold, the giant of Cyrene well-nigh forgat both Amahnah and the children, for the yoke of the Law grew heavier and heavier.

But he gave great alms unto many, and had thought to get him a trumpet and a servant—perchance Alukah or Judas Iscariot. But that was not to be, for, on a day, as he stood without his door, the bright threads of his calling in his ears, there ran a great crowd through the Dyers Street and also the Street of the Potters, and so on down the Coppersmith Way, and (as he thought) in the way of the Tyropœon and the Temple.

Then came suddenly another multitude. Men cried, "King! The King! Hosannah! The King!"

Said Simon to a person that ran, "What king? What king is this thou dost shout for?"

"King Jesus, Rabbi!" answered the man, and waited to give no further salutation, but again ran.

Then Simon in his heart, remembering all that Gheburah had told him: "I must behold King Jesus. He is at least a worker of miracles."

He therefore rushed back into the house, and placed him in a fitter garment for to see a king, and having embraced Amahnah and the children, went straight forth.

Looking back, he saw his children.

And this was the last that ever he did see them till his dying day. For behold, a great change was about to pass on the face of the whole world, in especial on the fortunes of Simon-Solomon of Cyrenaica.

CHAPTER XXV

The Two Cross-Bearers

Following the multitude, Simon of Cyrene passed out through the Temple, across Jehosaphat, and up the crowded western side of the Olivet Mount.

And all that were of the multitude brake them off branches of palm-trees (and Simon also) crying, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord!" And Ophidion was among them, and shouted with a very loud voice.

And Simon, recollecting all the mighty works of Jesus whereof he had heard, said in his heart: "Surely, at length, there is come our very Lord and King. Even Ophidion, the monster, doth follow Him. And the Nations shall fall before Him. Even as wheat before a sickle, so shall the Gentiles fall; and Jerusalem shall be glorified and exalted utterly."

They met King Jesus, riding on an ass's colt, so that Simon remembered the saying of Jehovah-Jireh. Again the multitude shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Ophidion was among them, and shouted with a very loud voice.

Then companied they Jesus back down Olivet and into the Temple.

And Jesus, having turned His eyes on Simon (but unto Ophidion He gave not notice) spake. And the heart of the giant was filled with a holy fire. He thought: "It is He! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! It is Shiloh, Adonai. At last I have seen Him in the flesh."

Then he would have gone and kissed Adonai's hand, and laid himself before Him in the dust, but he was full of a too great fear.

And the blind and the lame came before Jesus, and were healed.

And all glorified God, and the Temple rang with the praise of Jesus—Jesus, the mighty; Jesus, the Son of God; Jesus, the conqueror of the heathen; Jesus, Savior of His people, even Israel.

But Jesus went over to where they were that sold and bought

in the Temple, and cast them out, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves. And said unto them, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

And Simon saw Parush and others of the Pharisees. And he began to murmur with them, because Jesus had cast out from the Temple one that was a friend to Parush, and also for this that there were certain men which said unto Simon: "He hath spoken against the Law, and is a blasphemer of the Law. Can this man be Christ?"

Went Parush and the other Pharisees, and took counsel, how they might entangle Jesus in His talk—for these were determined Jesus should be put an end to.

But Simon passed down to Jericho, which is on the Jordan. There an aged priest lived which owed him moneys. Said he to the priest, "I will have that thou owest me. For I have talked with Parush, greatest of the teachers of the Law, and he saith thou shalt pay me, yea, to the uttermost. For I am Pharisee and Scribe, thou merely an *am-ha-aret,* which is dust beneath a rabbi's feet."

Said the priest, "I will sell the little I have that I may pay thee. Abide in the city a day."

All that he had the man sold, and Simon, having taken the moneys, returned to Jerusalem.

And when he had called together many beggars, he declared with a loud voice: "I that am Simon of Cyrene, I am very holy and give alms."

Then all the moneys which the aged man had paid him, that cast he forth to the beggars.

But while he yet cast, he heard multitudes shouting: "King Jesus! King Jesus again!"

And he betook him to the Temple, and stood in the court of the Gentiles, where Jesus looked once more upon him, so that in his heart Simon was ashamed because of the moneys which he had taken from the priest. And for this, that he was ashamed, he began again to hate Jesus.

And many of the other Scribes and Pharisees were in the Temple also. Jesus spake unto the multitude and saith: "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not.

"For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

"But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

"But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

"And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

"Neither be ye called Masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

"But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

"Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor.

"Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

"And, whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

"Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

"Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

"And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

"And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

"Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

"Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

"Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, and say If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

"Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

"Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

"For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Then rent Simon his inner garment, and cast dust upon his head, and sware with all his mind and heart and soul and strength that never would he say these words at any time unto Jesus. "Is Jesus Adonai?" he asked. "Nay, by God, not so."

He ran forth of the Temple, and went down unto Cæsarea, where a Gentile lived which owed him moneys. Saith the Gentile unto him, "I will sell the little I have, that I may pay thee that I owe."

Simon abode in the city for a day, and receiving his moneys, returned to Jerusalem, being minded to seek out his own house.

Now, it was his duty, and it should have been his pleasure, to eat the passover with Amahnah and the children, together with certain of the neighbors, but his heart was set on the purchase of a piece of ground. Thought he, "I will find the owner of that ground, that I may bargain with him." And all the while his heart was hot and bitter against Jesus. He kept repeating, "Never will I say unto thee, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' "

Arrived he therefore not unto his own house, but, by the way of the roofs, unto Bezetha, the portion of the city where the owner of the land lived. But the man was not in his house, having departed for another place with his whole family, there to eat of the passover.

Then spake Simon with one called Betsa, whose name, being interpreted, meaneth "Covetousness." Betsa saith unto him, "Down in the lower city dwelleth such and such a one who hath yet a far better piece of ground, the which he will sell for less, for he hath great need of moneys. But get thee from the way of the roofs, and go thou down by the lower passages, for so thou mayest discover the man, or ere thou reachest his house."

And Simon was fain to get down from the house-tops (whereon were the many paschal booths) and into the streets and alleys of the city. From many a house the festal lamp shone forth, and poured the sounds of joy and merry-making, and all the streets were filled with rush and hurry and glad preparation for the passover. But Simon of Cyrene kept on and on, and would soon have met the man which had sore need of moneys.

But behold, came wild shoutings, clangor of cymbals, trampling and alarms. Then the proud voice of a trumpet.

And the people cried as with a single tongue, "Pilate! The Procurator!"

Then some did curse, but others shouted: "Bow the knee! Bow the knee! All hail! In the name of Cæsar!"

So Simon was fain to take yet another way about, and when he had come to the house of the man he sought, there was one that said: "Such an one? He hath gone even now to the Temple. Thou wilt surely find him at the great wall-gate, which there is by the Temple at the north."

And Simon went and stood by the wall-gate of the Temple, and his heart was hungry and covetous, hot and bitter also concerning Jesus.

And he beheld that man, even Jesus, approaching, and certain disciples round about Him.

And he watched them leave the city by the gate, and go down into the loneliest part of the black valley of the Kedron.

And though he knew not why, nor felt compulsion, yet he followed Jesus.

Now Jesus and His disciples crossed the brook Kedron by a little bridge, turned somewhat to the left, and, straightway after, sharply into the right.

And Simon saw them as they entered the "Oil Press" (or Gethsemane) a tiny garden which there was of trees and flowering shrubs, surrounded by a fence of whitewashed pickets, which stood forth plainly in the surrounding darkness. Beyond, from the heights of Olivet, shone hundreds of the pilgrims' festive lamps, and flowed the sounds of happy talk and joyous laughter.

Simon did not cross the brook, but stood for a time in the awful darkness of the valley. Behind him, he felt the presence of the sacred lights on Mount Moriah.

He desireth to go and be with Jesus in the garden, yet to do this thing he is ashamed. Moreover, his heart is bitter still toward Jesus.

After a time he heard Jesus' voice in gentle protest, who saith: "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

Then thought Simon, "If His very disciples sleep, and will not watch beside Him, is it not better that I go away?"

He went, therefore, and, climbing the Temple slope, entered by that gate whereby he had left the city.

And lo! there were coming toward him Judas Iscariot and a band of tall men, bearing torches, staves, and swords.

Judas inquired of the Cyrenian, "Hast thou seen the man called Christ? Is he not in Jehosaphat?"

Said Simon, "The King of all this world weepeth alone in Gethsemane."

And the men passed on.

But Simon knew not whether he had spoken in jest or earnest. When he had deeply pondered, he bowed his head and wept. And when he had been long sobbing, behold again Iscariot and the band of tall men, with Jesus in their custody, coming back. But all the disciples excepting Peter and John, had left Him. Simon watched Jesus and the multitude as they entered the city gate.

Then came unto Simon one who said, "Thou doest well to weep, Cyrenian."

Said Simon, "A stranger thou. Why do I well to weep?"

The man answered, "I bring thee tidings from a friend of other days, even Lampadephorus, an Athenian. Far from here is he, and hath been set upon and wounded grievous."

Then began the Jew to frown and curse. At length: "Shall I commingle with the heathen as of old? Shall I succor idolaters? Shall I, prithee, listen while a man calleth false gods? I am better than thou, messenger, and Lampadephorus and all that be as such, for I am son of Abraham, chosen of Adonai, student of the Law."

"Lampadephorus dieth," saith the messenger.

And Simon would have put the man away in any case, saying: "Gentiles! Can ye understand the thoughts and feelings of an Israelite?"

But the messenger would not suffer the giant to go. He reminded him of all that his ancient teacher had done for him, reached in his scrip and gave unto him a bit of bone. Then said he, "Thou wast bone of his bone: so did thy friend declare I should say unto thee."

Then the Jew, as in the amazement of a great dream, taketh from his own bosom (where, as a matter of custom, he long hath carried it) that other piece of knuckle-bone, the counterpart of this.

And he looked at the two for a very long time, fitting them both together carefully again and yet another time, while a melancholy smile of human tenderness parted his bigot lips.

And remembering the comradeship of other days, his soul yearned for his master.

He therefore to the man saith, "Lead on."

They went north of the city to a place where a Grecian temple was, in ruins. When the messenger had departed, then found Simon in the farthest corner of the temple, beside a broken statue of Apollo, Lampadephorus of Athens, older by far than in those golden days, and likewise wasted and dying of a deep wound near the heart.

Simon knelt beside him and kissed him, saying: "Awaken! O awaken! for I am Samson-Solomon of Cyrene, thine aforetime pupil. Awaken, my Master, for lo! I am by."

Said he that was Master (and his eyes were changing): "Art thou Jesus?"

"Nay," quoth Simon. "Of a verity, I be not that man."

"I have heard Jesus," said Lampadephorus, "and know not what to think. Half way He hath persuaded me. Thee too—thou art Samson of Cyrene, whom I knew of old—thee also I do not understand. Thou couldst never have half— But I am thy friend. Understandest thou me?"

Simon turned his head away, because he could not bear to see Lampadephorus perishing.

But Lampadephorus said, "Weep not; for I am aged, and the aged must make room for others. Lo! I have been dreaming. Methought I had turned to flaming ashes in an urn, while the ashes of Jesus lay by in another. Thou didst stand near with flaming brand. A youth greatly like unto me (he may have been my son, for sons do return to fathers in dreams) came anigh with torch unlighted and shapen like a criminal's cross. A wick leaned out at the topmost part thereof, and yet one more at each of the ends of its transverse beam.

"And the youth came to my urn, and lighted a wick at one of the ends of the cross-piece, then unto thee, and lighted yet another at thy brand. Then on to the flaming urn of Jesus, where he lit the topmost wick of all.

"Then ran he away, shouting: 'Salvation! Salvation and great light unto the world!'

"And thou didst follow with thy brand, but saidst not anything."

And Simon would have pronounced to Lampadephorus words of comfort, but the Greek suffered him not. "I have been too faithful unto Cæsar. Hence—perish. Soon they will return to bury me. Say not, but take this parcel and deliver it. The governor at Cæsarea —unto *him*. I had not wholly fulfilled— Dost thou love me, Samson-Solomon? He will reward—haply he shall give thee my place—as under Cæsar—Cæsar Lord of All this World! He repayeth good—evil—it is unbeautiful anyone should strive against Cæsar—this world."

So the ancient master of the Jew pulled slowly up his mantle round about his shining head, and was no more seen of Simon's or of any other eye upon earth.

And Simon wept with a loud voice.

And he staid not, but gat him out upon the way to Cæsarea.

But behold! there was one standing before him—a mighty robber with uplifted sword, Barabbas.

Struck Barabbas Simon of Cyrene a smashing blow with the flat of his blade on the head, so that the giant of Cyrenaica staggered and became weak.

Simon said, "Stop me not. I am on Cæsar's business."

Laughed Barabbas. "What is Cæsar's business? One short hour ago I was captive unto Cæsar in Jerusalem. Now I am free. A destiny looketh after me, and I will not perish till my time."

Then Simon, supplicating: "I prithee let me go. I am of Israel,

and God knoweth the thing He would have me to do, even by the word of an Athenian."

"I also," then said Barabbas, "am an instrument of God's." He struck the Jew yet again, so that Simon, already weak, fell down and was as one dead. And when he awoke, his message for Cæsar had been taken.

Therefore Simon fared not unto the seacoast, but turned in the way of the Holy City. Yet, as he passed along the road, he thought: "Haply that villain, Barabbas, spake better than he knew, whenas he declared he also was an instrument of God. For behold! if the governor at Cæsarea had given me some great reward, I might have been brought to enter Cæsar's service, and so have remained therein."

He fell to pondering on all that had been in his life—the solemn fields and melancholy sheep in Cyrenaica; the seraph-eyed Amahnah, which was Child of God; the earnest old teacher, the Chazzan; the captivity in the South; the sneering mongrel, Trivialis; the blow he had given that foolish man; the prophetic dream he had had in the tomb of his father; then—the coming of the bearer of the light, even Lampadephorus, the radiant one, who sang rejoicing. He thought of his early days beside that shining Greek, then the seeking at Jupiter Ammon for him that resembled Trivialis, the finding of the Man of Evil in his stead, even the lithe serpent, Ophidion. Then, too, of Crocodilopolis he thought, and of Azrikam (that embodiment of sinlessness and merit) and of that well-nigh fatal conductress into the Egyptian abomination of abominations, Emah; the second journey by the side of Lampadephorus; the combat over against Sinai; the parting in the desert with the well loved Greek; the passing, at the rear of the harlot's caravan, unto Petra; the helplessness of Jeezer (that good and intense old man) who had recalled the ancient prophecy that there should be no rest for the sole of Solomon's foot, yea through all the days that he should live, no rest; and then the treachery of modest-seeming Gillul—the stone, the child, the inhuman sacrifice. Ah-h! He put his fingers in his ears. Then his further falls from righteousness—Shikkuts, Abaddone; the pirate ship, which had been as a rod to his soul; Apodoter; the joyous Return. And then, ah then—the Law! O Adonai, thy Law, thy Law! He thanked Adonai for that Law as for some treasure without price. It preserved him, Simon of Cyrene, from all idolatry, that holy Law! There should in fact be no more idolatry in Israel, solely because of the hedging and the fencing of the myriad-branching Law.

As for Gentiles—he made a movement of utter contempt.

Now when God (who had already created space and time—and

matter, which extendeth and endureth within these) constructed the world out of glowing chaos arising from a collision of dark stars (for so the philosophers of these days inform us that the world was made) then, having beheld, at length, that the earth had grown prepared for life, He created primeval cells and set them in the darkness of the waters. And the cells grew thriftily in the water, and greatly multiplied and developed into curious forms. And after a time there were many cells that drew together, each unto each, into wondrous agglomerations—perpetual intermarriages of interdependent flesh with interdependent flesh. And some of the strange agglomerations went out upon the land, learning to live there. And behold there were certain things which crept, and certain things which swam, and certain things which flew, and certain things which walked, or ran swiftly. And among these things were monstrous icthyosaurii, flapping pterodactyls, billowy behemoths crushing forests down with intimate great roarings; and, at a later age, swinging in the boughs, slight, hairy, tail-handed creatures, whose little, ever-shifting, and inquisitive eyes were strangely prophetic of future sublime intelligence.

Then when life, after certain "days," or "ages," had prepared a body and an intelligence sufficient unto the spirit, then entered the spirit of the Lord into an union with that body, and so had been created—Adam. And Adam carried the image of the Lord within him, but, for that he had come up out of the earth, he was called of the Lord "The Red Soil," which is to say "Adam." It is all so written in the Great Allegory which stands at the beginning of The Book.

And unto Adam was given Chavvah.

And, later, the slippery serpent (father in after times of many an Ophidion) did seduce Chavvah and Adam to sin.

Then were sons and daughters born unto Chavvah and unto Adam, and the world was filled with the sons and the daughters, and idolatry was rife, for the sons and daughters of the Woman and the Man, had forgotten God.

There arose thenafter an avenging flood. But certain ones (for this, that they of all the multitude had not forgotten God) were saved from the deluge. And yet the sons and the daughters of the saved became also, in turn, idolaters. Then the Lord chose Israel to be as a priestly nation unto the whole world, that the world might not again forget Jehovah.

And the Lord said unto the priestly nation, "I will scatter thee and yet preserve thee, and will also school thee closely. And behold,

I have set me a purpose in thy preservation and in thy scattering and in thy schooling. Also I have me a purpose in this, that I have chosen thee, and not some other people. And shouldst thou fail in my purpose, then will I send unto thee Assistance, that the purpose may be fully accomplished." And these things declared He to them in divers ways and manners.

Now there was, in the mind of Simon of Cyrene, as he strode wearily in the way toward Jerusalem, no knowledge at all either of dragging icthyosaurii or of flapping pterodactyls, nor yet of the ways of the Lord about matter, whereby He doth follow the course of each and every atom through its consociations and disattachments—inexpressible journeys in our not-to-be-comprehended space and time. But only a love of the Lord was in melancholy Simon, a soulful yearning to behold El-Shaddai in the flesh—an ineffable longing which he kept hour after hour in trembling leash (as one who knoweth the sacred dangers of too great love) in leash and check by ceaseless, infinitesimal conning of the oral Law. Therein safety! "Oh the Law, the Law! I thank thee, my Jehovah, for the Law! It bringeth out of darkness unto salvation. Let the Peoples know thy myriad regulations after us, the Jews, and so rejoice."

Now, as Simon came anigh unto the City, the walls thereof drew out into plainer and plainer view, also the Tower of Antonia, the Temple, the multitudes of booths and tents—over beyond Kedron, and likewise westward of the City, also northward, in his own way, where the rock Scopas was.

And while he gazed specially on the flaming, if tiny, garments—yellow and red, silver, sapphire, and amethystine—of many that were standing on the city walls, he thought again on Jesus, and on Jesus's many miracles, but more about that marvelous Master's opposition to the scribes and Pharisees, and to the various hedge-like forms which had come from the learned lips of the like men. He, Simon, had, in a way, rejected Jesus (had he not?). Yet, like Lampadephorus, he had not known precisely what to think of Jesus. Surely the man had spoken as never spake man before. Surely, also, a mighty sword had been a far better—

But his eye was caught by a commotion among those flaming multitudes which, strangely enough, were standing on the city walls, and all of which were gazing intently down on a sight that yet was well within the city, but which, as Simon believed, was moving nearer and yet nearer in the way of the northern gate—that gate which now he was fast approaching.

The gate burst open with a mighty clangor, while a rolling cloud of thick dust boiled on out therethrough.

After a little time, the man perceived in the dim center of the heaving storm and earth-hell uproar, a curious kind of executional procession.

Foremost was a body of whirling men, who danced ahead and then danced back, casting vehement arms as if possessed of Satan.

Behind came a herald, blowing a confused trumpet.

Next was a band of Roman soldiers, steady in scarlet and brass.

Then, in the midst of the huge vortex of human and inhuman uproar—the one fixed point in the dusty chaos and whirlwind—were three drear victims, one of these staggering and each with a cross upon his shoulder. There was plainly Dysmas; another, Gestas. The one that staggered and almost fell, who— What was it that cast an unearthly radiance all about—transfiguring the City, the land, the contaminating crosses, even the hot, vociferant multitude and the soldiers of detestable Rome?

He drew a little nearer still, and beheld—

No—yes—nay. Yes, it was truly—Jesus.

He rubbed his eyes and again peered—stared with starting orbs at Him who formed the gray-gowned pivot of this unshackled and ex-sequestered portion of hell: this staggering, swaggering, running all about; this shaking of horrible fists and shrieking yet more hideous anathemas — tradesmen, beggars, scholars, apprentices, agriculturists, priests—shakers and shriekers all united in the common elements of blood-lust and the dust. In the center, Jesus. Of that there could be no doubt. Jesus, humble as the trodden soil beneath his feet, yet of a strangely infinite majesty, eyes like heavenly lights a-shining in the darkness and moral chaos.

Ah, Rabbi Jesus, thou that hast spoken to my heart, that hast seemed to possess within thee the strength of all the inexpugnable hosts of heaven! Art thou, then, Adonai? Messias? the conquering Son of God? And goest the way of shameful sinners unto incommiserable death and the worm?

His heart grew wild then, and a strange, thick compulsion seized upon him, so that, although, as he thought, it were better by far for a man like him—a whole head higher than any other in that multitude—to have passed around below the eastward wall and the Temple and so to have got within the city unobserved, yet still he fared onward, nigher and nigher to the victims and the troops, especially unto Jesus.

He had come quite near, and saw that Jesus was again staggering,

that the Master carried the upright portion of the cross over His right shoulder, both bleeding hands locked prayerfully about it, so that one of the halves of the transverse beam lay close and tight against His heart. The far end of the upright dragged along the ground behind Him. Yet, even so, the strength of Jesus was nearly exhausted.

Jesus once more staggered, stumbled a time or two, and fell. Simon all at once perceived that he had foreseen these matters from his childhood. And he was filled with a great fear.

Certain of the soldiers ran to him, and catching him by the waist said: "Come thou, Jewish hog! Take up the cross!"

Shouted Simon, in fear and rage: "Cross! Contamination! For a Jew! A cross!"

He would have resisted the soldiers unto the uttermost, but that Jesus, who had again arisen, looked straight upon him with eyes of ecstasy.

And it seemed to Simon that Jesus might have uttered one single, soft, sweet word, and that that was—Bear.

Bear?

Had he only imagined the word, or had Jesus in fact pronounced it?

A grave, unearthly singing filled his ears. All the thoughts and doings of his life appeared to arrange themselves in some bright, perfect pattern, set upon them suddenly from above.

He would have cried out unto Jesus, "Rabbi! Master! Thou that art the Son of God!" but that his lips were holden. So he answered only by lifting up the cross.

Ah, happy, and yet forever hated, Simon of Cyrene! Happy in that one infinite second of earth-sequestered time! Splendidest personage in all finite, all merely human, history! For thou alone of them that were born of the daughters of men, couldst take over upon thine own and only-elected shoulders the redeeming cross of Christ. Others have also borne our Savior's cross up the steep, rugged, blood-soaked Calvary of Time, thine own dear people, the children of the flesh of Father Abraham, in especial. But thou—thou—

"Onward! As we said in the court, His blood be on our heads and on our children's. Onward! To the place of a skull! Crucify Him!"

So they mounted up the hill. Jesus led the way, in the midst of the flux, reflux, and perpetual intermotion. Simon, as he followed, was scourged in the place of Jesus.

"Onward! Crucify Him! His blood! We are bonded unto His death! His blood!"

The vanguard stopped at the vertex of the hill, and formed a hollow square about the place of execution, while there raged round the impassive soldiers an innumerable multitude, insomuch that they trode on one another's heels.

Simon gat him without the square, and stood a little in the way of Bethany from Jesus. The city with its scarlet and yellow peoples on the walls, the golden-snowy Temple high above the green-tabernacled houses, and the stone-gray prison of Antony—these made a mighty back-scene for the awful terrors of the day.

Certain of the soldiers placed the crosses on the ground, stripped the men, and laid them down along the crosses.

The crowd fell silent, and Simon imagined he heard the watchman, in the tower at the Gate of the Gardens, cry: "The third hour, and all is well, all well."

Now the hands and feet of Dysmas and Gestas (who were lying, the one upon the right, the other to the left, of Jesus) were bound to the crosses with leathern thongs, but the legionary who saw to these matters, when he had come to Jesus, took nails and hammer, and quoth, levitously: "*Unus—duo—tres!* Now the left hand. Next the feet. So we have thee, thou Son of God." And the chief priests and the peoples, and all the scribes and Pharisees cried out: "He *saith* he was the Son of God. *Vah!*"

The soldiers lifted up the crosses, and shot them into the holes which had been prepared for them. The space about the holes was filled and tamped solid. "May ye be damned forever!" cried the thieves, suffering intolerably. But Jesus merely said, referring also to the soldiers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

And these were the first of the words which Jesus spake upon the cross.

"Jesus," said Simon in his heart, "dost thou forgive!"

He looked with amazement up to the eyes of Him that hung upon the midmost cross. But when he had beheld the expression with which Jesus looked back down upon him, he thought that all the world was clothed with a garment of sweet music and majesty.

"Dost thou forgive, O Jesus?" There came into his heart the recollection of his own fond scheme of revenge. Then also a whisper, saying: "Thou Simon of Cyrene! Long have I sought thee in Jerusalem, and now—"

Simon, turning, beheld Ardelio, the busy-body and mischief-maker of this world.

Saith Ardelio, "I bring to thee an opportunity of much revenge."

"Revenge!" Simon looketh yet again up to Jesus. Then once more at the captain of the ship, which had brought him news of the Mocker, Trivialis.

"Revenge!"

"Aye, surely, revenge. Why sayest thou 'Revenge' as thou hadst never before known the meaning of 'revenge'? Behold! I have seen thine enemy. He dwelleth in Athens, liveth luxuriously, hath useful knowledge which he came by from thy father, in no small measure thy father's moneys also, doeth, in a word, the thing which liketh him, whatsoever it may be, while thou who art surely entitled to those moneys (as well as others whom I know) thou, I take it, art under some strain of compulsion."

"Revenge!" quoth Simon yet again, like one lost in dreams.

"Why, man, verily—revenge. Why still sayest thou 'revenge' so foolishly? Knowest not what revenge is? Hast recollection? Dost thou not—"

But Simon placeth a finger to his lips. Then he whispereth, "I love that mocker, Trivialis."

"Love—love Trivialis!"

And the heart of Simon had indeed been purified by Jesus until the Crucifer beheld that he had wanted the blood of Trivialis for his own private gratifying, as well as for the love of Abraham. Simon felt, were Trivialis here at the cross, he might have kissed that man, even as he would have kissed Amahnah or the children. For he remembered the little camels out of clay, which the Mocker had made for his infant hands in Cyrenaica, likewise did recall that troubled dream within another and yet more troubled dream which he had dreamt in Edom, wherein he had thought that he had killed the man which had plucked a deadly serpent from his neck. So here, at the foot of the tree, the Crucifer sought, in his whole heart, forgiveness, even of Christ, for that he had hated his enemy. Jesus looked upon Simon with compassion, and it appeared to that man as if all the voices in the universe were saying, in glory: "This is He! Jesus! This is very God, spirit of forgiveness and love."

But Ardelio saith, "Revenge! Thine enemy! Believest thou on Jesus, O fool? The fellow hath been rejected of official Israel, of the very High Priest himself. Canst thou not comprehend as to Trivialis? A chance, opportunity. The Mongrel still doth scoff at

thy religion. Still he hangeth about the wine-shops, the women, still he squandereth—"

But Simon gave Ardelio all the moneys which were hidden upon his person, and which Barabbas had not found upon him, and which was more than Simon had ever promised. And Ardelio went his way.

And Simon, turning yet again, beheld that the soldiers had parted the garments of the Lord among them, and that, above each thief was suspended a board whereon was written "f-u-r," while over the central cross another had been hung which, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, ran: "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews."

Then raged the Pharisees, with Parush at their head, and many chief priests also, crying: "King! He is not our King! Have we not said to Pilate, We have no king but Cæsar? And now hath Pilate mocked us so!"

Some of the chief priests ran, saying: "We will speak unto Pilate about this matter; for he ought to have said, not This is Jesus the King of the Jews, but that he *said* I am King of the Jews."

But they that remained passed round about the cross of Jesus, wagging their heads and crying: "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself and come down from the cross." And some of the scribes also jeered, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." Others still, "Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." And the hollow square was broken up, that they which railed might get nearer to the cross.

One of the malefactors which were hanged beside Jesus, railed upon Him also, saying: "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." But the other (which was Dysmas) answering, rebuked him, saying: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we received the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." And he said unto Jesus, after a time: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Jesus then: "Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Thought Simon, while he looked upon the crucifixion of both types of revenge: "Art thou, O Gentile, saved, while thou, Gestas, which art a child of Abraham, art thou still impenitent? And are my people forever to reject thee, O Jesus, even the chief priests and the very scribes and Pharisees?"

But behold, there were those of the priests which had run unto Pilate, which now were coming back. They cried from a great distance, "The Governor saith, 'What I have written I have written.'"

And the air was filled with wild lamentations, shouts of hate, and execrations both upon Pilate and upon Jesus. But certain of the common people murmured, saying: "Surely the Man was Lord and God."

The multitude drew back yet further from the crosses, because they feared the priests and the scribes and Pharisees. But the soldiers sate beneath the crosses, shaking dice and swearing.

Then cometh Parush to Simon, and seeing compassion in that man's countenance, saith unto him: "Many there be in this multitude which believe on Jesus. Art thou also turned idolater?"

Simon said, trembling: "I am not an idolater."

But Parush said, "Yet I see thou hast at least a certain acquaintance with the Nazarene—hast borne His cross."

And Simon, even as that other Simon, surnamed Peter, on the night before had done, denied his Lord, saying: "Nay, but I know Him not at all, having merely heard of Him, and, as for bearing His cross, I have not borne it. By the gold that is in the Temple, I have borne it not at all."

Then declared Parush, "All the world did see thee. I believe thou art an idolater."

And Simon's heart was an-hardened with a sudden fear, lest indeed he should again have become an idolater. He murmured, "It was another man." But inwardly he thought: "I must settle this matter as about idolatry at my more leisure, for surely the Lord our God is but one. And yet I know not how this Jesus—"

And the Pharisee of Pharisees, even Parush, had gone his way, with contempt and threatenings in his stride. But certain of the women—Jesus's mother, and Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene—these, together with the disciple named John, had come up close about the cross.

And Jesus, when he had seen them sobbing, said unto His mother: "Woman, behold thy son!" And unto the disciple, "Behold thy mother!"

And it was nearing the middle of the day, and the crowd waxed thicker over all the neighboring houses and hills. The chief priests and the scribes (with Parush at their head) railed on, with ever louder and more discordant voices. From time to time, in a lulling of the storm of cries, there burst forth again the sobs of the women round about the cross, or imprecations of the soldiers, or words of low compassion from the tremulous multitude.

Simon stood at a little distance from the cross in the way of Bethany, pondering both on Parush and on Jesus. "Had this man

come with a sword! I might indeed have believed on Jesus—had He come with a sword, had He come with a sword."

But he somehow felt also that, even in that case, he might not have changed. "Ah, Adonai, Adonai, thou hast made me what I am. Can a hill of marble (which is like to a Jew) of itself make any change within its being?"

He noticed that the shadow of the great cross, as it moved from the westward unto the east, had shortened and was drawing anigh unto him (as though it were the gnomon of an immense sundial) until at length it lay out straight and black and sharp before his straining vision—from the bloody feet of Jesus to his own. Was it merely a fancy, or did this shadow of the Great Contamination pause—as if the sun itself would have lingered upon the hour, have emphasized it utterly? To Simon it seemed that the shadow of the cross he had borne was pointing him out as Christ's crucifer unto all the world, unto all its unending generations.

A single name escaped the Cyrenian's lips—Jesus.

And later, he questioned again: "Who art thou, in fact, Jesus?"

Jesus, looking down upon the man, as if by way of answer, permitted this His crucifer to gaze within His soul. But what the bearer of Christ's cross beheld there, he would never believe, so long as he remained on earth.

And some of the soldiers shouted, as they drank their wine, being a-drunken: "Here's to thee, now, King of the Jews." Then again, among other matters: "Wilt thou not take a little vinegar on a sponge by way of drinking back to us? Here, thou Son of God!"

And a great darkness fell upon the earth, and silence thereafter, so that the multitude did hear the cry of the watchman in his room above the city gate: "The sixth hour: all is well."

And Simon believed that he saw Jesus, in the darkness, turn and look at the gathering stars. One after another considered He them, as if, time after time, He might have dwelt upon a many of them. And Simon began to think once more, as he had thought in the body of the Babylonia, on that saying of Anaxagoras, which saith that many of the stars are worlds like this one, and that they may perchance be inhabited by people of like passions with ourselves. Were there, then, Jews there? Priests? Any highest priest of all? Suffering? Sin? A necessary Savior?

CHAPTER XXVI

The Wine House

Now, meanwhile, Ophidion had been faring to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem, hating, listening, whispering, suggesting, setting into the great world currents of evil thought and all manner of misdeeds. Some of those currents are moving about until this day.

And he came, in his wanderings, to a wine-house which was in the lower city, a vile resort kept by a woman called Cupiditas. And Ophidion being desirous (for a time) of great forgetfulness from his own sins, entereth the shop.

There he seeth an idle companion, whom he knoweth well of late, Compotor, as well as Microtes and Aletis and Antipetros, and likewise other sons of mere tumult and harm. And there were also twain philosophers who sate in a corner apart.

The sons of tumult cried aloud, when they beheld Ophidion, "Hail to thee, Sarcogenes! Sarcogenes, all hail to thee!"—for Ophidion had changed his name (since he had become, for purposes of his own, a follower of Jesus) from "Ophidion" to "Sarcogenes," which is to say "One That is Born of the Flesh." "For," said he, "I would not be called 'a lesser serpent' any longer, the followers of Jesus objecting strangely to that appellation, and, as for the flesh, the flesh is good enough." In his heart, he thought that neither could any other man believe that there is harm at all in the flesh.

So he standeth within the entrance for a time (resembling, to one who looked not deeply, a great bright angel) gazing the company over to see if it were just to his liking, and what he might do with it.

Then the sons of tumult cry again, "Hail to thee, Sarcogenes!"

The man answered majestically, "Hail!"

And they were glad to be companioned by him, for they knew of his authority with Pontius Pilate, and, thereby, the Lord of All this World, even Cæsar.

So they made a great room for him at the table, and he, when he had gone and whispered to the keeper of the house, even Cupiditas, came and sate down with the sons of tumult.

They drank and drank again. And still again they drank.

Then said Sarcogenes, picking up a goblet wherein were many dead flies: "I will bet any of you that in this cup there be either odd or even flies." Some said unto him, "Odd."

He answered, "Even."

So they laid out their moneys, and counted the flies. And behold, the flies were even. And Sarcogenes took the money.

But then the great one said, "Yonder, on another table, is another cup, wherein also are flies. Let us once more bet, but, this time, twice the money."

They bet, and the flies were counted, and the money was that of Sarcogenes.

Then said the sons of tumult, "Let us bet again, that we may at length beat thee. Yonder are still more flies. And see, we will wager ten times more than that which we did wager last, and we will finally beat thee. And all shall carefully count the flies, that there shall be no mistake."

Sarcogenes said, "Odd."

The flies were counted, and they were even. But just as the sons of tumult would have taken up the moneys, behold there came yet another fly, which dropped down upon the pile of flies, and, dying, was counted to his own gain by Sarcogenes.

Then uprose Microtes, shouting: "Thou hast cheated! See! Thou art Beelzebub, the King of Flies! And the flies do obey thee, and die for thee!"

There came in the face of Sarcogenes a look both of amazement and horror. He beat the small one out of the wine-house, and, returning, sate down angrily at the table.

Then entered yet another man, a certain servitor of Sarcogenes, saying unto him: "Thou didst come before me hither."

"Yea," cried Sarcogenes, "and I will beat thee hence."

And so he did, with a dagger, giving him deep and grievous wounds.

And Sarcogenes went and stood in a corner apart, where a deep shadow was, and the other companions of the drinking counted flies for long in silence, or sate merely whispering.

But one of the twain philosophers saith (that he might break silence) "I hear that this man, Jesus, is being crucified."

"Yea," saith the other, "even now he hangeth upon the cross. He saith that this is necessary to save men from sin."

"Sin!" cried the first philosopher. "Now what is sin? There is no such thing at all as sin, say I. It is only an invention of the Jews, sin. The Greeks know more than the Jews, and they know there is no such thing as sin. Besides, I can show this all to be true by philosophy and by all the learning of all the schools—Athens, Antioch, Alexandria—"

But a doctor who had just entered the wine-shop, brake in upon

him: "Thou sayest truly there is no such thing as sin. I have never dissected a human body (as some have done in Alexandria) but I have dissected apes and cattle, and in none of these (either in any of the organs or in the chinks between those organs) was there ever any sin."

Said the first philosopher, "Thou talkest as a fool. Thoughtest thou to find sin in the shape of a thing to be caught between the fingers and pinched? Is sin a gall-stone? Is it a solid concretion of the stomach? Is it any secernment at all, or excretion, or any kind of flesh or piece of bone? Pah! There is no sin—in that thou speakest truly—but thou shouldest know metaphysic to be able to prove it.—What sayest thou, Compotor? Is there such a thing as sin?"

"Yes," said the man so spoken unto, "I say that there is sin. Let be a moment, and I will—hic—enlighten thee. Now, if I do a wrong to thee, that is an offense, a damage, unto thee. Yet it is also a crime unto the state, and a sin unto God. So I say there is such a thing as sin.—But what—hic—doth it matter? We can easily get rid of sin. A sacrifice or so; a white sheep, a good fat calf—all is well. And then we are free—hic—to sin again. Thou spakest even now of Jesus—"

"What sayest thou, Sarcogenes," said then the first philosopher, "is there any such thing as sin? Need any man a savior? Need he, in especial, Jesus—"

"No," cried the tall one in a voice of thunder. "Fools! Sin? Follow your own natures! Nature cannot mislead you. Your appetites will teach you rightness in all things. What is natural cannot be sinful, nay nor in anywise hurtful. Ye are all fools that ye do even discuss such matters."

But a fool in another corner saith unto them, "I had once a brother who followed his natural appetites, committing thereby both adultery and murder. Said he unto Pilate at his trial, 'Pardon: it was nature.' Said Pilate, 'It is also nature that I execute thee.' He is gone—a cross—why doth it darken?"

And there entered the wine-house one that cursed and gnashed his teeth, but, when he had seen Sarcogenes, became high respectful. Sarcogenes led him a little way apart. The two drank deeply at a table together.

"Thou art late," said then Sarcogenes, so that none other in the room might hear.

"I did try to follow thee for long," the man saith, "but ever and

again thou seemedst to dissolve into nothing. Even now came I hither by accident—to drown mine anger and my doubt."

"Thine anger—thy doubt!"

"Anger for that a certain Simon of Cyrene, for whose sake I had learned the whereabouts of a certain enemy of his, would not, when that I had brought him tidings back, consent to listen. Said he, 'I love that man.' What thinkest thou, that any man should love his enemy? And doubt—for that—this teacher—Jesus— Why dost thou look so strangely? Pray, be still—or look some other way from me. I cannot endure thee when thou lookest so."

Then whispered the lean and dark Sarcogenes in the man's very ear, saying unto him: "Be not deceived, Ardelio. This Jesus is solely a blasphemer (I know him well) and a raiser of sedition. He was tried for blasphemy (was he not?) condemned for sedition, and is now being executed therefor."

"His doctrines?"

"Folly."

"His miracles?"

"Magic."

"But thou thyself dost follow Jesus."

"Be not deceived: I do merely delude his disciples.—Hast thou had no pleasures since I saw thee last?"

"Yea. I have worshipped at Corinth and at Rhodes, and have had much pleasures of the flesh."

"It is well. Thou hast a true religion.—But Jesus—'Twas I that agged on that traitor, Judas—and for a reason." Here he filled the mind of Ardelio, the foolish busy-body, up, with terrible lies as against Jesus, the which he bade him spread with all industry both in the city of Jerusalem and likewise in all the other places of the world whatsoever, in which he might chance to be. And many of these lies are extant still.

And he gave him moneys, and called for much unwatered wine. And the twain drank in deep silence, while one of the nearby philosophers saith to another: "I tell thee Jesus was mad. He was an impostor withal. He expected that His followers would come and release Him from the cross (the which they will not do) although He surely did prophesy that He must die on the tree, then be buried, and so, after three days in the tomb, come up from the dead."

Said the second philosopher, "As for this Jesus, thou knowest I am flat against Him, but behold! I think Him a just man and one from on high."

"But what say the Greeks?"

"The Greeks? I will tell thee what the Greeks say. There was one Plato. Perchance thou knowest Plato. Hast heard of Plato—and Socrates? Well, Socrates saith, 'We must of necessity wait until some one from Him who careth for us shall come and instruct us how we ought to behave toward God and toward man.' Hear now Plato: 'We cannot know of ourselves what petition will be pleasing to God and what worship we should pay to Him, but it is necessary that a law-giver should be sent from Heaven to instruct us. Oh, how greatly do I long to see that man! That law-giver must be more than man, that He may teach us the things man cannot know by his own nature.' "

"Then why believest thou not on Jesus, if thou holdest with these passages?"

"A sign!" he cried. "A sign from heaven. Ere I do believe, I must have some certain sign."

"A sign from heaven! Well said indeed!" cried Sarcogenes across the room. "I, too, would have had a sign from heaven. Had I had that—a certain sign and straight from heaven—I too would, of a verity, have believed."

"There shall be no sign from heaven," said the other philosopher.

"It is true," confirmed Sarcogenes. "For Jesus is an impostor. Therefore hath He not any sign from heaven.—But tell me (ye who will) is it indeed very dark? It is not the ninth hour—for I have listened to the slave at the near-by water clock. Even thy nose, O Ardelio, I scarce can perceive."

"It hath, for a great while, been dark," said the slattern, Cupiditas, keeper of the house, "but ye have not noticed, any of you. Drink deeper and forget the darkness."

Deeper they drank. And some of the sons of tumult vomited. One of the dull philosophers began, "A man there was that was seized on by the soldiers and made to bear Christ's cross."

"That is true," confirmed Ardelio, "and much offended was that man. I know him, a certain Simon, a priest that hath lost his genealogy. He was much offended."

"Nay," said the second philosopher, "offended was he not. I too did see him, and his face shone as he had seen in spirit a hallowed sign from heaven. I could not quite tell, but methought I heard the suffering Nazarene speak unto him—just one soft, sweet word. I could not quite tell, although I was close."

"There may have been magic in the word," suggested Ardelio. "In any case, when I did look upon Simon, methought he was greatly offended and would not have borne the cross for the world. A giant

too! He might have cleared an easy way before him, spite of a dozen soldiers."

Then said the first philosopher, "What God intends, that shall be done, spite of man's weakness or strength."

"But Jesus was not God." Thus Ardelio.

"True," replied the first philosopher. "He was not God. But God—by which I mean the informing spirit of the universe—controlleth the actions of all men that be—impostors, priests with no longer any genealogy, eke philosophers, governors, rich men and beggars and farmers, tradesmen and thieves—Cæsar himself. Even the humble scarabæus as he rolleth his orb in the dust is in the hands of God."

Said one of the sons of tumult unto another, "Spurcus, what kind of dung wouldst thou handle most pleasurably wert thou a scarabæus?"

"Dung?" said softly Spurcus, considering with profundity: "I believe it were the dung of a cow. Yea, the dung of a cow would it— I am—sure—sure it would be the dung of a cow."

"So would not I," said the asker.

"Well, what then?" asked Spurcus.

"The dung of a goat. Not the dung of a horse, nor the dung of a cow, but the dung of an old he-goat."

"Well, well: what's difference. Now, see here, thou art Obscenus and I Spurcus. I tell thee plainly the dung of a cow is pleasant perfume by the side of the dung of a goat."

"And I tell thee plainly I would roll my balls from the dung of a goat, for this very reason that it is a goat's foul dung, and stinketh. Now, therefore. Let us be reasonable."

"Reasonable?" shouted Spurcus. "I call upon thee, Sordes—thou art a fair man and a clean. Now see here. I cannot quite remember. Listen to me."

He ceased to speak and arose. His eyes took on the look of one studying a thing far off. He raised a hand to his forehead, then touched his lips.

All at once he vomited, with great force, clear across the room.

"Knew it was coming," cried out Sordes, as his rare foreknowledge were a miracle. "Let us go, all."

He started away, but Spurcus lifted cup again and would have drunken, but that the room of a sudden swayed, as the mighty world all at once had gone to sea. The goblet fell. A sound of groaning came from deep down within the foundations.

Spurcus, the vomiter, cried: "Jesus, thou diest, I not beside

thee. I meant to be beside thee. O Jesus, that diest to save men from their sins!"

He rushed into the street, his companions, laughing mightily, close after him.

One of the dull philosophers saith in a low voice, "An earthquake."

But Sarcogenes rebuked him mightily, saying: "We are all drunk: there is no earthquake but the surging of sour wine."

It quaked once more. The ceiling rent asunder, the floor gapped.

Then cried both philosophers, "It is an earthquake! What God intendeth to do shall be done, spite of man's weakness or strength."

Sarcogenes laughed so that his voice was heard above the louder and louder groaning rocks. He scoffed, saying: "Thinkest thou that even God can overcome the Devil? Why, then, doth He not so?—There is no earthquake.—No, by the very heart of Satan, God cannot overcome him. By the very soul of Satan, He shall not do so."

The philosophers looked upon the man with terror, and cried: "How knewest thou? how knewest?"

Went Sarcogenes up anigh unto them, and peered into their faces, as he might behold all the evil in their hearts, or ere he answered. The men arose, and ran shrieking from the room.

And Cupiditas crept behind the curtain of a doorway. The man of evil, flinging her gold, departed.

And when he had gained the street, he sought for any to whom he might make evil suggestions concerning Jesus. But behold, the streets were void. And many of the houses had been riven by the earthquake.

He was suddenly seized by a pain around his heart. He set both hands above his breast, therefore, crying: "Art thou back again, pain, and worse than ever yet before?" His lofty bearing was suppressed, for he bowed to the ground in agony.

But after a time he arose again, wildly whispering: "And thou mightest have cured me, O Jesus."

Having wandered about the desolate streets for a certain time, he at length, moved by an impulse he did not understand, fared to the Gate of Damascus, and, having passed therethrough, faced northward, following the city wall.

CHAPTER XXVII

A Great Shadow on a Great Soul

Now Simon of Cyrene was coming down the mount whereon he had beheld the crucifixion. And, as he came, he recalled the many

prophecies, which, though in unexpected ways, had been fulfilled in Jesus. He had also heard the Centurion (who had at first scoffed) cry out, "Truly this man was the Son of God," and, as he had left the dead, yet glorified, Jesus, he had beheld one in a shining raiment, a man like to that sunny-headed Greek of old, even Lampadephorus, but taller and yet more shining, running to the westward with a loud cry: "Unto all the world! Unto all the world!"

And Simon's spirit was filled with many things, the which he was not wholly able to reconcile. But mostly he thought about Jesus and His love. He inclined to the Centurion, who had declared: "Truly this Man was the Son of God." He thought, "I will talk these matters over with Amahnah. It is like we shall follow Jesus."

But just as he reached the bottom of the hill, he beheld that hypocritical Christian and son of all wrong, the black-faced Sarcogenes, who was likewise Ophidion.

Said Simon unto him, while yet a great way off: "Peace be unto thee, O follower of Jesus. I am this day full of love as toward thee and toward all men. Let us be brothers."

But Sarcogenes laughed him to scorn, saying: "A brother unto pork! By the god of flies and all the refuse of this world!"

"Nay, good Ophidion (or the rather Sarcogenes, as now they say men call thee) be not scornful, but love—thou—me."

And he held out twain hands, and would again have brothered Sarcogenes, but that that man of evil, and undeserving hanger-on of Jesus, spat upon the hands and refused them and taking up dust cast it in the face of the Jew.

The Jew said only, "Insult me not, O good one, but let us love each other truly, even as the Jesus whom thou followest—and whom I also now incline unto—would have us that we should do. For lo! He is dead, and yet He will live again. Will He not even do so?"

But Sarcogenes, he that was also Ophidion, in the room of confirming the Jew in what he, Ophidion, did know to be truth, said unto him: "Thy locket! Hast thou still thy locket? Or hast thou given it also (as once thou gavest thy genealogy) to a whore?"

Simon trembled with rage he could not conceal. Yet said he to Ophidion never a word of harmfulness, but only: "Brother—Jesus—love."

Then smote Sarcogenes him upon the cheek, and Simon smote not back.

Then said the Man of Evil, "Thou gavest the contents of thy locket unto Gillul, but the shell thereof to that other (and a far

worse) harlot—even Amahnah, which is Enooth and Machashebethel. And now ye seek for to give both her and it unto Jesus."

Then raised Simon of Cyrene his voice and cursed aloud before the whole world.

And the things which he said were such that even Ophidion blenched, and, drawing quickly to one side, ran back swiftly into the city.

And the words which the Jew flung after him both as concerning Jesus and also His many followers, may not be written here. For there was in those words the greatest blasphemy which ever hath been spoke.

And Simon followed southward along the city wall, and entered the city. For, in his present condition of mind, he would not return to Amahnah. Therefore after a time of passing to and fro, he went, by the dung gate, out into Gehenna,[1] or the place of burnings.

And behold, he felt that Gehenna was like the fires in his own soul.

And he wandered far, around and about, in this place, amid the filth and the flames, the smoking and the stenches, the forkings and the baskets.

And Simon, being weary and lonely of heart, went up unto the chief burner and spake to him.

And the chief burner first caused fresh loads of many more baskets of refuse to be piled upon the highest of the fires. There was for a moment utter darkness. Then said the chief burner, "Thou art the man that was rejected of the High Priest."

Simon wept.

Said the chief once again, "I perceive thee, who thou art. Thou art Simon of Cyrene, once known as Samson and as Solomon, a man destined to be mighty amongst the mightiest in Israel. But thou didst worship after a certain Temunah, then a certain Emah which is in Crocodilopolis. (Hast thou not told these matters concerning thyself?) And later, after a certain Gillul, which is priestess in Edom, and, later still, because thou wast incorrigible, thou didst give thyself up unto Shikkuts' sister, even Abaddone, which followed after Moloch, whose rites of fire were celebrated aforetime in this valley. And later thou wast rejected of the High Priest, and so becamest a Pharisee. And today (I know, for I have heard thee) thou hast thyself done a rejection."

Simon wept again.

And they began to cast ordure on him, shouting: "God hath chosen out a priest for naught."

[1] Or "Gehinnom."

But Simon, at this, ceased weeping, and turning upon them, cried: "Shall a man endure everything? No, by the gods. I am not this time the rejected. But who is He that I have cast aside? A god of Ophidion, and also, belike, of you. And as I do to you, so would I gladly do unto Him."

And he drave them round like dust.

And when he had harrowed Gehinnom, he (perceiving that soldiers were coming down into the valley) took refuge in one of the passages which there was, underground, beneath the City, and, wandering for a long time, came out on a certain hill, whereupon he stumbled often in the darkness, and at length fell and could hardly arise. And he fingered out three great deep holes, in which there had stood the crosses of that day.

So, having, through his flight from Cæsar, come unto Golgotha again, the bosom of darkness opened up before him as he lay, and he saw therein an innumerable multitude—both of Greeks and of Romans and of Jews; also of Parthians, Syrians, Egyptians, and peoples from all the world. And they marched in a strange, disorderly assemblage over the earth. And behold! at the head of the multitude were legionaries, shining in scarlet and imperial brass, and, in their midst (besides the indifferent thieves) two men—Jesus of Nazareth and yet another—

And Jesus, turning, spake unto that other, and behold! his countenance became illuminate. And he of the shining countenance took the unhappy tree from Jesus' shoulders, and placed it on his own. And in and out the boundless gulfs of space about these multitudes of men appeared and disappeared hosts of ecstatic angels, harping music which Simon knew to be eternal, for that it was far too sweet that it should ever die. And the song which the angels sang was, "Holy, holy, holy! Unto the Lamb is victory—victory upon the cross."

And the Simon which looked upon this scene, cried aloud: "No more: or else, being possessed with devils, I shall go mad."

And behold! the angels vanished, and the procession of many men with them, and he saw, in the way of the west, the lofty portals of the whole world's future unclose. He beheld from what he knew to be the ruins of the Holy City, that last world-kingdom, even Rome itself, waver and tumble into glittering fragments; saw the end of graven images; the risings of the peoples of the North, together with the innumerable multiplications of the conquering tree. He witnessed Jerusalem rebuilt with minarets and mosques, and heard the muezzin in his towers. Then he envisaged wave on wave of western warriors

seeking to release Jerusalem, and all did bear upon their lofty banners the sacred sign and symbol—Jesus' cross.

And he looked far over the northern fields of Europe, and beheld unaccountable great buildings, over each whereof did stand a glittering cross. And the buildings themselves were builded in the forms of giant crosses. And he went within the greatest of all the buildings, and beheld innumerable tiny crucifixes. And organs played, and sweet musicians, clad in shining raiment, sang, and the songs they sang were all about the cross. Standing alone in a rosy-and-purple windowed corner, he beheld in the palm of his own great right hand—a bloody cross.

Then ran he quickly without, and entered a place of innumerable graves, and behold! above each grave—a cross.

Then he cried aloud, and looked again and trembled, and beheld, beyond all Europe, a vast expanse of western waters. And he looked once more, and saw, beyond the waters, new and mighty continents. He said, "Behold! There be only red men here, and here there shall be no crosses."

But the words had scarce gone forth out of him, when he saw, moving along upon the water, three tiny ships, and each did bear the cross. And the ships came unto the land, and they that set first their feet upon the land, erected on that land—a cross. And all did kneel about the cross, and pray.

Soon there were crosses in these new countries also, both above the living and the dead.

And Simon looked still further into the future, beyond the millenaries and the deka-millenaries and, inconceivably, still remoter ages, built up and compounded of vast temporal extensions so incomprehensibly distant—but everywhere the cross!—that the soul of the Jew was riven asunder.

Then cried he aloud, "Why hast thou led me back to Calvary, O Jehovah-Jesus? Wouldst thou kill my soul, O Adonai, while yet it is in the flesh? Why am I so stiff-necked and enduring as against thee? Wilt thou arise from the very dead? Even so, would I believe upon thee? My soul is too tough that it should any time change. Thou hast made me what I am! Adonai, O Adonai! guide thou me!

"Behold, my back is bitten with the lash! My shoulders, they are dead with the bearing of the cross. Lead me not further into contaminations, but cause that mine enemies shall wholly forget that thing which I did bear this day. Let me no more prophesy. Am I an idolater? See, I beat my breast. I tear my garment, I pour dust like oil upon my head. I am a Jew. Why didst thou set the robber in

my way to turn me hither in the morning, and the visions now to bring me back at night?

"O Adonai, Adonai! Show me not any more dreams: these I cannot endure. My soul abhorreth the sessions of the night, the pictures that are painted on darkness. Show me not thy ways to come, O God, or I shall change indeed, and become a worshipper of the Devil."

And he sank into a swoon, or horror of darkness. Therein was the voice of the Lord.

And the Lord said unto him, "Simon, Simon! Thou that wast both Samson and Solomon! I am Adonai, He that spake unto thee within thy father's tomb in Cyrenaica. I have hitherto hewn thee roughly, but now I will chisel thee deeply and mark my lesser lines upon thee, and grind thee exceeding fine. And thou shalt never change at all without my word, for I would have thee be only in a certain way. And when I have no further need of thee, I will break thee into little pieces, and yet will preserve thee forever. Selah."

PART II
THE GRINDING FINE

BOOK IV. THE SCHOOL

CHAPTER XXVIII

Philosophy and Eternal Life

When, then, Trivialis the craven-hearted, had come forth out of his hiding, he would, when no one looked, be a-pilfering. And having grown bolder, he snatched at girdles and bulgas, and became, in time, a great robber.

But on a day, having received a fearful wound, he said in his heart: "I will go back into the city, even Athens. For, being much changed since I did leave the legionaries with a poor excuse, it is not like, now, that any shall be able to say to me who I am."

He took, therefore, the little sum which he had had from his last misdoing, and set him up a shop in the Street of the Ants, which had gotten its name from this that it was crooked, narrow and in utmost darkness.

But here he had no good fortune, even as ever had been the issue, when he had sought the ways of business on his own uninstructed part. Therefore resorted he to little shabby tricks, as, to wit, the selling of poor wine for good, the giving of short measures, and the making of false accomptings.

At length he began to ask himself, "Is it well to exist so? For behold, I am not any longer an honest man. Moreover, I soon shall have neither wine nor oil nor grapes nor figs nor oboli. But behold! I have a knife, and the edge is very keen, and my throat—"

Then he went for a walk in the agora and stood by the public sundial, watching the shadow of that inexorable finger, the digit of Chronos or old Time. He said, "What shall be for me when time is no more?" Again he felt of the edge of his knife.

Came then certain philosophers walking in a near-by stoa, in their midst a tall young man, richly apparelled, a new disciple, who was both lean and yellow of countenance. Said one of the teachers to the young man, "Verily I do tell thee philosophy is that department of human intellectual endeavor which seeketh to comprehend the universe as one single rational whole. It refuseth to see the parts of the world except in their relations to other parts."

Said the disciple, "Yea, but today I am told by my physician that

I must shortly die. And I am fearful lest, when I die, I shall wholly dissolve and lose my relations to all the other parts. Who hath not at some time felt so? Speak ye therefore unto me concerning the immortality of the soul. Your fees shall be doubled."

Said a Pythagorean, "I will tell thee, Humanus, what my master hath said upon this point. Thou knowest Pythagoras—he that was born in Samos, or, as Aristoxenus asserteth, a Tyrrhenian? He made a cavern deep within the earth and so secretly that only his mother did know thereof. Then went he down thereinto and hid. His mother dropped into the cavern daily certain tablets whereon she had written all the happenings of the city. And after a very long time he came up forth of the earth again, wrinkled, lean, and looking as he were a skeleton with a mere skin stretched over it. He passed out into the Agora and said he had come from the dead, and told the people all those things which had gone on in his absence. Then thought they him a divine being."

But Humanus coughed and spat, and said irritably, even with his hand over his chest: "But what said he about the soul, about life everlasting?"

The Pythagorean smiled and answered and said unto him, "One of his so-called 'symbols' was this: 'When travelling abroad, look not back upon your own borders.' Whereby he meant that those preparing to die should cease to care too much about life. And yet—"

"Is there not some one," Humanus asked, "that can tell me what I fain would know?"

"Not so fast," replied the Pythagorean. "My master did believe that the souls of the righteous are transformed and absorbed into God."

"But I—I myself—am I lost?"

"I fear that thou art lost."

Then said Humanus, "Yet another speak to me."

Spake unto him a pupil of Zeno, a Stoic, a very lean and slender man, marching with slowness and sad dignity. Said the Stoic unto Humanus, "If thou art worthy, thou wilt indeed, after that thou hast departed the earth, pass into the Infinite Being. But first thou shalt live on, thyself as thyself alone, for a certain limited period: long, hast thou been just, but short, if unjust."

The Epicurean chuckled. Not like unto the Stoic he, but of glad and rosy countenance. Turning his bright, keen eyes both upon Humanus and all that company, he saith: "Why delude the dying?

We are bones and ashes—nothing more. Let us therefore drink and eat and be as happy as we can, for soon—"

"I have already said," cried out Humanus, with a despairing wave of his bony fingers, "that, for me, this life no longer exists. Is this the comfort ye give?"

The Epicurean answered nothing, but cat-footed softly over against the public sun-dial where Trivialis stood, feigning to study the dial.

Then said another (while Trivialis, with his finger in his bosom and still upon the knife's edge—leaned over and listened that he might not miss one word of that which was unto him as a judgment) "I remember," said this other of the mighty teachers, "how Socrates is thought to have said (as we may guess from Xenophon and what that writer declareth about Cyrus on his death bed) that no one knoweth whether indeed the soul existeth after the bodily death or not, but he thinketh that the soul may be eternal, and because of these three things: (1st) the reverence which all men show to the dead (2d) the soul's invisibility (3d) the likeness of death unto his brother, sleep. And likewise certain other reasons not necessary to be distributed and numbered."

"And he felt not certain, then?"

"Nay, not wholly. Speak thou unto the Platonist."

But the Platonist—a hunchback with a beautiful countenance—said without asking, "I, indeed, know more than any of these others about the soul's true life and its ever continued being whenas the body has fallen from it away.

"My Master, Plato, has in fact, in his 'Phædo,' held that the soul doth own three several parts, corresponding in outward nature unto plant and animal and man. The effect of the superdominance of the one part or the other is seen in (1) the Phœnicians and Egyptians, who most love profit (2) the vigorous nations of the North, who most delight in fortitude and valor (3) the Greeks, who are all for culture and the things which appertain unto mind. Now, this three-fold thing, the soul, is immortal (as the man himself has said in his 'Phædrus') because, from it, originateth motion; also because (as he saith in his 'Timæus') God himself would not destroy so wonderful a thing and all beautiful as is the soul; and, finally, because (even as the Master hath put it in his 'Phædo') the soul's eternal longing for future life is a fine and cogent evidence that such life pertaineth by very nature unto it."

And when he had finished, then was the company silent a very long time, for each of them present did know that these were the

greatest of all the arguments which philosophy hath for the immortality of the soul.

Over by the steps of a near-by temple men were playing at mora, crying: "I win, I win: I have won everything!" Farther away, a little grinding sound was heard, the under-moaning of the world at trade.

There passed a trembling shadow over the sun. The Epicurean, who stood even yet by the dial, announceth unto them all: "It is now high noon."

Came a wail from the sickly lips of Humanus. "Know ye, any of you, the least certainty about these things? Know ye these things at all, or are they merely speculations? Say."

"Speculations only, as thou seest," the hunchback saith unto him. "As Socrates declared, 'We never can know concerning these matters, until some one comes from the other world to tell us.'"

Then the Epicurean whispered, "The sky darkeneth, even at midday. And there be no clouds."

At this the Skeptic laughed, but the Platonist admonished him, saying: "Laugh not at all; it darkeneth."

And all the other philosophers repeated, "It doth darken."

The busy city became silent, and the world as it were a hornful of ink. High upon the Acropolis, a heifer moving up for sacrifice in the temple of Athena Parthena (the Athenian virgin) lowed, and after a very long time, lowed yet again—in the midst of a solemn hush as it were in the unpeopled meadow of a distant farmstead.

"The gods have heard," said the Skeptic, "and do revenge themselves upon us that, just now, we were discussing sacred things, which they alone might fathom."

But the disciple saith, "I care not what fortuneth me here, for die I shall in any case, and ye also, now or a little later. But I would a friend or a brother might have died and come back and assured me certainly of some of these other things. Oh for a friend or a brother that might come back!"

And the city remained in darkness, and more and more dreadful groanings came from under the height of rocks.

And Trivialis fled the Stoa, nor knew which way he went, but ran, some of the time this way, again that. And all the world was dark for the space of three hours, whenafter—a mighty earthquake, the world shaken to its foundations. There were moanings in the center of the earth, and people from time to time cried out in the very deep darkness.

CHAPTER XXIX

Via Dolorosa ad Maximum Protracta

Simon of Cyrene led the procession of the miserable.[1]

All night long the wretches had marched—these poor, friendless convicts, in the night-chill and the dust. Sentenced by the judges of Cæsar were they, some for great offenses some for little: better by far, too, taken by and large, than any of the judges who had condemned them.

Poor *servi publici*, slaves of an indifferent state, marching to who might say what further indifferences and indignities!

At the head of the procession, bigger and more mournful than any of the others, plodded Simon of far Cyrene.

In his mind the disconsolate Jew retraced again and yet again the cruelly incomprehensible events which had come to him so lately that they seemed still a portion of the bitterly sensible present.

He went back over this march, and recalled the landing at Gades, there among the free-eyed, curiously watching tourists from Massilia and Rome; back still farther to the weary tugging at the oar across the

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[1] It has been asserted by a number of commentators, without, however, one scintilla of evidence, that Simon became a Christian, either at the foot of the cross or on some later day. Others declare that, though we have no reason at all for supposing that Simon himself ever became a Christian, yet that it is surely proved that his two sons, Rufus and Alexander, did certainly become such.

Here, now, is all the evidence which we really possess upon these three points: Matthew, 27, 32: "And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to go *with them*, that he might bear his cross." Mark 15, 21: "And they compel one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go *with them*, that he might bear his cross." Luke 23, 26: "And when they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, and laid on him the cross, to bear it after Jesus." John nowhere mentions either Simon or his sons. Plainly, the language of Matthew, Mark and Luke is not of a kind even to suggest the probability that Simon was a Christian at the time when these three gospellers wrote—i. e., many years after the crucifixion. "One Simon of Cyrene," etc., is hardly the language that would have been employed for the purpose of designating a fellow disciple. As to Rufus and Alexander, these are mentioned by Mark alone, and by him not as "brethren," or "disciples," but only as persons who, perhaps, would be better known to those for whom Mark was writing than would Simon himself. They might have been known either as Christians, or as non-Christians—even as actual persecutors of our brethren. The sacred author neither states nor implies in what capacity the sons of Simon were known, but only implies that, being known, they might serve as means of identification of the Simon who bore the cross—and who is presumed by all the gospellers to have been unknown to Christians.

As to the attempted identification, made by certain writers, of these three characters with persons of the same name mentioned in some of the epistles, the authoritative Edersheim says ("Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," II, 587): "Thus much only can we say with certainty; to identify them with persons of the same name mentioned in other parts of the New Testament can only be matter of speculation."

Where, then, all is uncertainty, the fictionist is free to invent.

laughing lengths of the Inland Sea; back beyond the tearful embarkation in the gay, if accursed, city which bore the name of the Lord of all this Earth, even Cæsarea; back, still farther, to his own false trial and unchartered conviction.

Ah that trial, that conviction! Thou, too, O Jesus, thy trial—Thou couldst understand!

He had been found by Sarcogenes, Sarcogenes and all those very soldiers that had rattled the dice round Jesus' cross. Him they had found dreaming, him, the cross-bearer, and on Calvary! "Strange," cried one among the legionaries, "that he who bore the cross for Jesus should have come back to the very Hill!"

There, at all events, Simon had been found by the Man of Evil and his watch.

And him they had brought by the ashen light of early morning into the Pretorium, and so before Pilate—into that very Pretorium in fact wherethrough the Lamb of Nazareth—

Ah Jesus, thou couldst understand, an thou wert by me!

Pilate, as it seemed from what the other prisoners who waited with Simon said unto the Jew, had somewhat repented of his judgment against Christ, and his heart was therefore angry as toward all men. (For a half repentance is apt to be a fearful matter.) Had not Pilate's very wife, Claudia Procula, the while her husband sate in judgment on Jesus, sent unto him, saying: "Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream concerning Him"?

And now his fearful, if wolfish, heart, misgave Pilate (so the report ran) lest he had done to himself a public woe, for many of the people were becoming followers of Jesus, which was surely the Christ. Caiaphas indeed with all of official Israel about him (whom Pilate despised) would not be convinced, but bent their hearts on fearfullest mischiefs as against Christ's followers. But they that banded round the procurator, having witnessed the great darkness, the groaning of the earth, the rending of the veil in the Temple, the resurrection of the dead, had (a many thereof) deeply sorrowed, saying: "Surely this man was the son of Jehovah."

Even many of the Jewish people were sore afeard, and some believed.

Therefore, when Ophidion and the watch had fetched before Pilate's judgment-seat the gigantic Jew which had aided (as they against him said) in the crucifixion of Jesus (inasmuch as he had borne upon his shoulders the necessary cross) some of them that had trembled around Pilate were hopeful in the extreme. For

(thought they, and Pilate after them) we shall have some chance to show our sorrow at the former deed, and, as for this Simon of Cyrene, he shall be the scapegoat for us in this matter, that he shall. Is he not an accursed Jew?

When, therefore, at the hearings, Ophidion (who, as heretofore declared, had had in public some plain leanings unto Jesus) arose and read the delation against Simon, the trial was got through with quickly.

Quoth Ophidion (on whom Pilate smiled): "Here indeed, O sorrowers for Jesus, is the arch-conspirator against our Lord, the Christ. Were it not so, Pilatus, would he himself have borne the cross even to the place of execution? Would any Jew have done that willingly, seeing with what an abhorrence a Jew doth look upon a cross? Or would I and the legionaries of great Cæsar have gone to apprehend this man, were he not guilty of the crime alleged? We do not think so. And then we have unnumbered witnesses here, who can, with their own tongues, testify whatever may be necessary. If thou art willing, O thou that standest in the place of the Lord of All this World, let these truthful people speak."

And the witnesses, being sworn, declared, some that Simon had often attempted to conspire not only against Jesus, but also against Pilate, and even against Cæsar himself. Yet others asserted that the man had stolen the garments of the Crucified, there at the foot of the cross (being naturally a thief) while the soldiers (who were legally entitled thereunto) were busy at casting dice. He was both murderer, said they, and thief, this Simon, the Jew.

Then spake Simon of Cyrene in his own behalf. To no purpose.

Declared Pilate, "Thou shouldst indeed be executed, O Simon of Cyrene, that the fate of thee and of Him to whom thou wast a fearful traitor, might be a resemblance each to each, yet, as a sign of great commiseration (which thou nowise deservest) I do commute thy sentence unto imprisonment in the Mines of the Wretched so long as thou shalt exist. I that stand for Cæsar am much too lenient toward thee. Besides, in the Mines we shall be able to torture thee longer than by any execution."

Then took the soldiers Simon of Cyrene, and burnt these letters in his forehead—"F-U-R," meaning "T-H-I-E-F." By this name the man was known to many until this day.

And Ophidion and the soldiers jested, saying: "Simon of Cyrene is now a man of three letters"—which, in Rome, meant a person who was a member of some noble family.

The Jew, then, they shackled and took to Cæsarea, where they

placed him on a galley, nor suffered that man, before he embarked, so much as to kiss the soil of Palestine, saying: "It is mine." But they declared unto him, "Thou shalt be known forever in this world as a thief and as the plain murderer of Jesus."

And after a certain period in which he escaped from their hands and was again and yet again recaptured, he at length was toiling over the waters, which mocked him with their bright, innumerable liberties.

He now beheld himself for that he was yet to become—a naked, half starved *servus pœnæ;* an accepted, a brow-imbranded, thief; the plain murderer of God's Innocence; a mere caricatural existence of three detested letters which he had never deserved, and of a sad, unpriestly past.

And the man who had brought these things upon him—the trial, the conviction, the branding, the accursed galley, the mines of the untold happenings—that man was a solemn, a much belauded follower of Jesus! Pah!

Away with crosses, with calvaries, with followers of Jesus! Away with the Nazarene himself!

What had he, a beaten *servus publicus,* a man of just three letters, to do with incarnations, with messages from Heaven, with things of peace, blessedness, love?

He was a detestable convict now, toiling through the dust and heat. Only a dim, triliterate existence he, dragging slowly onward toward the terror and the agony of the unspeakable mines. What had he longer to do with this upper world of light and happiness?

He was just the same as dead.

That shining villa, for ensample, lofty on the side of the green mountain, with its glorious xystus of innumerable cloud-white columns which ran down lightly to the cliff's sheer margin—what had a *servus publicus* to do with things like that? Not any more than a corpse. He gazed up dully, and beheld, in the xystus, two massive togæd forms. How shiningly arrayed were these—like unto angels! It was not quite possible to behold the faces of the men, but Simon felt that they were surely countenances (however high above him) of kindness, of great love.

All at once (he knew not why) but an intolerable missile (a pebble, perchance, which at so great a height came like a thunderbolt) had smitten him on his uncovered head.

He fell, not knowing the matter for a jest—a side-splitting, as well as head-splitting, joke, which one of the men in the shining garments had perpetrated when he had seen that the leader of all this wretchedness was a Jew.

As soon as Simon beheld the world of life again, a scourge was embracing him.

When he arose he was buffeted, kicked in the side. Once again he fell.

Then, like a person in Hades, the man marched on—chief wretch and leader of all the wretchedness of this earth.

Ah happy, yet unhappy, Simon of Cyrene! Thy path in the coming years, will it wind amid rosy plains or up and about snowy-templed terraces? Poor gigantic crucifer! Hitherto indeed, thou hast had some quantum of contentment, some brief companionship and sociability, some softly-running hours of sacred joy, the blessedness and peace of the Lord thy God. But what of thy future? O most stalwart and sadly indestructible cross-bearer, thy years can never be the same as in Cyrenaica and Palestine. Thou hast borne Jesus's cross. Realize the cruciality of that, O Jew! And well for the rest of the peoples of earth (though bitter fact enough for thee, I trow) that thou art staunchly stalwart, fearfully resolute (if sometimes faltering) and, of an absolute verity, not to be destroyed.

But at present, thou art trudging upward toward those heaps of scoria.

Past the rejection hills, at length, he went, this Simon of an almost infinite *via dolorosa,* and round the shoulder of a mighty mountain, then round yet another, and then another still, and all at once he was looking down into a chasm, a black, sick void, so vast, titanic and full of inscrutable terrors that it seemed the product of Satanic dream.

"Halt!"

Simon and the other wretches stopped stock still.

Now he gazed yet further into the terrible valley. And the sun having got over the edge of a mountain, which hitherto had hindered his shining, it lit up there a strange, delirious profundity of space, and of deeps in further deeps, but not, even now, to their ultimate interiors and unimaginable depthy bottoms. Then this Simon of the Wretched Downlook began to perceive that, far below, a number of yellow roads were carven in the sheer stone walls of the valley, while, hither and yon, ran angling bridges, out from one steep chasm-side and into the other. Therefore the roads zigzagged from rocky wall to rocky wall again, down, and down, and down—and behold! there were small black openings, at irregular intervals, which plainly ran far into the secrets of the mountains. And naked *servi publici* scampered like pale, unvalued ants, both into and out of the sickening blackness of those holes. Some bare heavy baskets, some—

He became stupidly aware that a word of command had been issued to the troop of which he formed a part. Once again—

"Descend!"

Beginning at the rear of the procession, the slaves were slanting their bodies to disappear along a declivity which Simon had not noticed before, but which led down into the sullen cleavings of the earth.

The caravan moved but slowly, for the road was narrow, and the *procurator metallorum,* together with a band of soldiers, stood close beside its entrance, and, as each and every slave passed down into the chasm, the procurator made a small notation on the leaf of a tablet.

Sometimes, when the wind was right, the Bearer of the Cross could catch the wretch's name, his number, even the designation of the pit in which his body was to work.

A number of soldiers were sent along the road to guard the end of the procession where Simon was. Vain precaution! For who, of all these slaves, could ever have made an escape, shackled, and with only a single road to run on—straight-up mountain walls above, straight-down precipices below! How little the eagle looked, as he circled, mid-air, to and from the pale sides of the mountains! Oh the irresponsive, the unfeeling, mountains, as inexorable they as that strangest of dreams called "Time."

A little decurion was speaking to a stately tribune. "By the very angel of the Lord! It is God's own truth," said he. "Mine eyes did witness."

"But it absolutely denieth the common procedure of the world."

"Thou sayest truly. But others than I have seen, and now do know—our own centurion, Longinus, among them. The earth trembled and groaned, the air was full of darkness. The veil was torn from top to bottom in the Temple. And many that had slept in deep forgetfulness rose up out of their graves and were seen in the public streets of Jerusalem.

"And after all these things did Joseph of Arimathea, having obtained permission of Pilate, take away the body of the Man and lay it in his own tomb."

Now the heart of the Jew, as he listened, seemed to cease for a while its beating in his bosom, for he perceived that the officer of the watch was speaking about Jesus. And he experienced a strange joy, a sense of many happy things to come, inexpressibly perfect.

"Jesus arose from the dead," went on the decurion.

"What is there troubleth yonder Jew?" cried out a legionary.

"Lift but a finger again, O dog, and I will kill thee straight. The giant is oddly agitated," he remarked to the tribune of the troop, "and clearly intendeth a departure."

Then quoth the decurion again, "I tell thee, Tribune, that Jesus arose and was seen by many which could not be in error. Pilate did repent him that he had given judgment against Jesus, and Caiaphas and all that were with him in that sorrowful matter, lay closely hid, till that the storm had blown itself to pieces.

"But Jesus arose.

"The Pharisees had set a watch about His sepulcher, lest haply His disciples should come and steal His body away.—But Jesus arose." And he described all the marvelous events of the Resurrection.

He spake also of the prophecies, which had been fulfilled in Christ. So the Tribune cried, at length: " I must, hereafter, learn much more about Jesus."

But the decurion: "The prophecies about the Jew— Shall not they also be fulfilled?" But what he said further, Simon heard not, for the procurator of the mines having come up with him, cursed him, and spurned him, and bade him march on.

Simon at first believed that he and the few criminals which yet remained were also to pass down into the valley where the bridges and the mines were. But this was not to be.

The file of troops wound upward into a country where the face of the sky was covered with dark, disordered clouds, mingled with great smoke, and where the sides of the mountain were piled with heaps of ashes. Here and again the walls of the mountain were punctured with tiny pits. From one of these a naked man with great scars all over him came running breathless. A soldier, following, struck him on the head with a sword, that he died instantly.

Then said Simon in his soul, "Did Jesus arise from the dead? To what purpose? But all such things are lies. For behold, even I, a priest of the Almighty, am sentenced to such a life as that which is in these pits. Would that my soul had died ere my body was born into such a world."

Then he heard again the voices of the tribune and the decurion, who were treading close beside him. The decurion was saying to his fellow officer: "But Jesus saith unto him, 'Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed.' "

And at this there came a gleam of lightning from the sky, and the voice as it were of Jehovah rolling round about the mountains.

Then the Jew in his heart: "Oh for the strength of a thousand, and vengeance on all that do encompass me!" He thought on the weakness of his shackles, and how readily he might have wrested swords from two of the soldiers (as Lampadephorus, long ago, had taught him the way to do) and then might play the dimachærus, cleaning a path unto light, unto life, unto eternal liberty.

But his hands were holden, for he perceived that all the earth was against him, partly as being a Jew and partly for better reasons.

So he marched with the other slaves.

Presently they came to where great pans of golden ore were smelting, and he passed through sheds, betwixt long files of vessels wherein lay the molten gold itself. And he thought "This, all this, is Cæsar's. Had I had but a little more of Cæsar's gold, I should not now be a slave intended unto the mines." Looking at the gold, he beheld therein his own weary countenance. He shuddered and gazed in another direction, for he was sick at heart, having beheld in the gold the letters on his forehead. A subprocurator took charge now of the slaves, and brought them round to a place where a vast hole was that ran straight down into the mysteries of the mountain. As if to mock the weary convicts, the clouds tore apart, flooding the world with a heaven of splendor. A gigantic windlass sate above the hole, and the windlass was turned by a number of horses moving round and round eternally.

Then knew Simon of Cyrene that here his course as a man was ended, for, from out these mines with the upright shaft (as often he had heard) the slaves came never into light again.

The procession halted and formed a ring of sheer woe round about the pit.

Said one of the officers unto another, "What is the name of this particular mine?—for I know that all of the mines together in these many mountains are called 'The Mines of The Wretched,' but of this particular mine I know not the name."

Said another officer, "The name of this mine is 'The Nameless Mine'—for that it is clearly the worst of all the mines that are, or have been, or ever yet again can be, and hence no fitting name could be found for it, and they that named it named it only 'The Nameless Mine'—and Hell were a pleasant place by the side of it."

So Simon of the Blasted Heart, standing quite still, and knowing that this was the end of his dear looking in the light, gazed over the now sun-filled landscape.

Beyond the scarred and scoriæd rocks and the long black sheds, and the farther-reaching mountains, he could just discern, as he

thought, far, far, below, a tiny plain, a little landscape woven out of light. And, winding through the plain, a peaceful river.

The windlass groaned louder and yet louder. A vat rose up into the great mouth of the hole, laden with Cæsar's ore.

Six slaves ran up (O happy men, suffered to work here in the sunlight!) and received the precious substance in monstrous wicker baskets. These they carried to the sheds where the crucibles lay.

Some of the slaves were branded, some not. And Simon knew that they that were branded were the worst hated and despised.

And all of the newly arrived slaves but Simon, at an order from their officer, being freely unshackled, stepped down into the vat, the branded and the unbranded alike. But for Simon there was no room. And the vat descended, and all the men that were standing in it were looking wholly down.

After a time, the officer came up to the Jew, and spurned him again, and buffeted him on the mouth, saying: "Is it worth the while of officers to wait for the vat again, when only a Jew remaineth? Moreover, the vat hath work to do in lifting ore. Get thee down, as a consequence, into the deeps of the mine by the pegs that are fastened in the wall of the pit. By them have better men than thou descended when the vat was not running. When thou hast passed the openings of the many galleries and come to the bottom-most level, and canst no farther go, then will a tall man appear before thee with a good scourge. He will take thee to the place where thou shalt labor. Descend!"

At that the man spurned the Jew once more, and spat upon him. And it came to the mind of Simon that he should kill this brute, and getting him swords from the soldiers standing by make a happy departure. Or, if he died—that also, was it not well enough? But, in a way he could not understand, the hand of the Jew was holden yet again. He seemed verily to lie beneath some great compulsion. As he looked back over his life—which he did in the one second wherein his shackles were stricken away—it seemed that the whole of his existence had been only a matter of compulsion.

He gazed at the distant plain once more, with the river running through it, then at the people round about. Not far away, the decurion and the tribune were speaking still together of Jerusalem and Jesus.

He looked down into the pit, and beheld, at first, merely a horror of darkness. Next, he saw the nearest of the pegs whereof the officer had spoken. As if moved by unseen hands, he got down over the margin of the pit, beginning to descend.

It was not himself, he thought, that went the imperious way to further wretchedness, but only the mere shape and semblance of a man; the ghost of a person in whom was nothing left but shame and sorrow; rather a bit of sheer suffering, or super-suffering, marble—a statue in the process of being carved and with a whole infinity of outraged nerves within it, underneath the hands of a masterful, a divine, an eternally inexorable, Compulsion.

CHAPTER XXX

Conatus, The Man Who Was Free to Choose

Not as a thing moved by superior forces from without, but as a man whom his own free volition urges, did Trivialis of Cyrene and all the countries of the world, go down into yet another hateful mine. And there he labored with a strange incessancy.

The manner of his going was this.

On the day when he had felt the whole earth shaking, after it had been in darkness from the sixth hour to the ninth, he had grown high wondering if much less sorrowful, and had thought on many things.

But, when the morning was come, he considered: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow ye may die."

He went, therefore, later, into the pottery-market, crying: "Who will undertake to supply a dinner? Who will undertake to supply a dinner?" as the custom was among them that would let the making of a banquet.

But, of a sudden, a passer caught his arm, crying: "Thief! Scoundrel! Liar! Give me back my purse, thou scoundrel, thou!"

But Trivialis pretended he knew nothing at all of the man's bulga. And when the man would have pressed him further, he tore from him, and, getting his feet together, ran away.

The robbed one after.

But Trivialis, he of all the countries of the world, understood the devious windings of the city. So, in a trice, by doublings and counterdoublings, runnings up and down stairs, and dartings in and out of courts and also along galleries and through waste places, he came at length anear unto a pile of broken pottery, and, stooping as he ran, gathered up the bulga—which he had dropped there on an earlier passing.

And after many days he found out Euryophthalmus, and they twain went into a wine-house, and became a-drunken.

They passed thereafter into the temple of Chronos, who by the

Romans is called Saturn, a decrepit and baldheaded man with a scythe in his hand. The father of Zeus himself was Chronos, and, thereby, of many other gods. For that very reason mocked these fellows him, saying: "What art thou, O Time, but the fit subject of a joke, and also all the other gods that be, seeing these are the sons and daughters of Time only?" And they flung filth on the statue of Chronos, and cursed both him and his twelve descendants, the great celestial deities.

The watch came, and ran after the fellows. And Euryophthalmus escaped, but Trivialis stumbled and fell to the ground.

And him they led to the agora, and into the court which is called *Stoa Basileios,* or Royal Portico, for here it was that crimes against the gods were rightly justiciable.

There the fellow was set, all of a tremble, in the presence of the angry and dusty multitude which had followed him, and of all the watchmen of the temple—them that had fetched him hither. But soon he beheld again, to the right of the Stoa, his old comrade, Euryophthalmus. And Euryophthalmus made a mirthful countenance, which caused that Trivialis laughed, and then Euryophthalmus made off again to safety.

But when the Archon Basileus—he that would try Trivialis's cause—was come, then the mouth of Trivialis dried up with terror, and his heart was wax.

The Archon sate upon his high seat, and read at first an ancient parchment with calm intensity. Nor did he vouchsafe to look down about the crowd.

But, after a time, he glanced from his manuscript, and then his solemn-seeming eyes rested on Trivialis. Yet was his mind, as before, playing still about that ancient scroll. And Trivialis laughed. For the fellow never could be serious long.

The Archon looked upon the culprit with a sad, sweet smile. He said, as his look came clearly to the present hour—

"Have I already adjudged thee, or waitest thou still?"

Trivialis laughed again. He said, at his ease: "I still await, O Archon Basileus, the trial thou wilt give."

"Knowest thou," asked the judge, "that I was drifting in the mighty past? It was even so. For behold, the present is a very little thing, and there is nothing of it. And all the great are dead. All the great are dead."

Trivialis laughed again.

The judge looked up once more (for his eyes had again gone to his book) and said, "Thou doest well to laugh, O friend, for there

is nothing now that is worthy of more than laughter. Thou hast laughed before, too, I warrant, to judge by the little tiny wrinkles a-playing round thy mouth. They be practiced wrinkles, they be practiced wrinkles."

Trivialis laughed once more, admitting: "Yea, they be practiced wrinkles, O Archon!" And he thought, "This, of a truth, will be a very pleasant judge."

"Thou art an Epicurean, I warrant. But no. Thou then wouldst live almost entirely within thy senses, and I see thee better than that. Not an Epicurean? Well, then, a Stoic. But Stoicism is, at bottom, nothing but pride; and we need, we need—humility. In a world like this—but after death (according to the Stoics) there is nothing for us but cosmical ruin. Would that some one from above could give us a great assurance of life eternal—and of life worth living eternally.—Thou art witty, sensual, mirthful, forceful, and eloquent—but not of much force. Ah *hum,* I am sleepy. What is thy name?"

"Trivialis."

"Trivialis. Hast thou already been adjudged, or dost thou still await me? A fitting name, methinks—Trivialis." He smiled once more his thin, wan smile, as were he a very great man all aweary of this world, yet one of far too sweet a nature that he should care to weight a fellow being with his own weariness.

"Whence comest thou?"

"From the city of Cyrene, also from everywhere."

"What dost thou in Athens? Art a student?"

"I came on a mission of revenge—for all men have revenges. But behold, the revenge is accomplished. Yet there is still another matter. A treasure was entrusted unto me. I have squandered it. For I am light and merry of heart, and very thoughtless. I was even born so. When I have no master—I am nothing. Now my master's son, which is Samson, which is also Solomon, and whose home is in Cyrene, or else Jerusalem, he is a priest unto the world for the sake of Jehovah."

"Jehovah—I have heard somewhat about Jehovah. The Jews—Jehovah."

Now Trivialis would fain have spoken out before the Archon, yea and before the whole world, saying: "I can indeed inform thee as about Jehovah. He is the Lord of Lords, King of Kings, Creator both of time and eternity. So much I have learned, yea and far more also, from the lips of Jehovah's priests, even His chosen people, the Jews." But the man's heart faltered, and he spake not out at all concerning Jehovah. Instead, saith he—

"I, on my part, have no message unto any one. May the gods take care of themselves."

Then the Archon frowned deeply. His bright blue eyes grew dark, and he bent them on the frightened Trivialis, seeking, as it might have been, to pierce that man to the soul. "He is charged with sacrilege," brake in the officer of the watch, though he had not been asked, "sacrilege even against Chronos, which is Time, and all the other gods, which be Time's descendants." Said the Archon, "It is enough. Come hither, and stand at judgment beneath the tribunal, fellow."

Went up the trembling caitiff even to the tribunal itself, seeking on the way a semblance of carelessness.

"Fearest thou nothing?" demanded the judge. "Knowest thou not I am here on the authority of Cæsar? In a way I *am* Cæsar. Knowest thou that not, and fearest thou nothing?"

"Nothing, most truly, O mighty Archon, in all this endless world nothing, save only to be alone. I would crawl and fawn, like a starved dog, to the foot of any man, though he were a beggar, rather than be alone. To get into company, there to laugh—that is all I seek."

The Archon dreamed a little longer, as if he would try the man upon some deeper principle which he had nearly forgot.

Suddenly he fell asleep.

Trivialis looked upon him for a time with mingled amusement and sorrow. The splendid old Archon, the sweetly-smiling Archon which tried to understand his fellow beings that he might do unto them beautiful justice, was the dying flower and type of the jurisprudential portion of the old Greek civilization, that gently perishing past which still was kept alive for a little by the hand of Cæsar. And Trivialis perceived this matter clearly, becoming, in consequence, more and more sorrowful.

Now, as he would not be too sorrowful, he began to look again—to the right of the open Stoa—in that direction wherein he had aforetime beheld Euryophthalmus. But Euryophthalmus had gone away, and there was passing by the side of the Altar to the Unknown God—which was straight behind the dais of the Archon—a beautiful young man of mighty stature, who seemed to be compact of supernatural light. And with him was a woman of marvelous beauty, half Jew and half Greek, also two mere striplings, one of a sweet the other of ecstatic countenance.

All at once, they four were shut out of view.

And Trivialis heard the low hum of the city, and looked up to the

red, gray rock of the Acropolis, and beyond to its uplifted sanctuaries, then off in the way of Piræus, to the sapphire sea. Now his soul was filled—that soul which had so little of the gift for true beauty—with a hazy joy at all this crystalline loveliness. He began to long for better ways of life. Yet soon he took notice of the people's confused hum again.

Then heard he at a little distance these strange words repeated: "Who hath seen in the city a sombre merchant, Trivialis?" Looking off in the way of the left, the man before the Archon beheld the red-eyed Euryophthalmus, gazing about from door to door, like a public crier. At the same time, Euryophthalmus looked up suddenly unto Trivialis, as he had not seen him until then, and shouted: "Why *there* he is!"

Then he darted away, that he might not be apprehended by the watch.

But the Archon Basileus started up from his deep consideration, saying: "Yea, yea; I would demand of thee further interrogatories." He smiled again. "Loath am I to punish thee. For behold! who, after all, doth know but that thou and thy ways are quite as good as I and mine? Who are these gods? I myself know not. We of the present— Art thou happy?"

"I can at least," said Trivialis, "forget for a time that I am sorrowful."

"Sorrowful! Thou sorrowful? What sorrow hast *thou* ever known, O trivial one?"

"This," said Trivialis, while his lips trembled, and he saw that the judge loved him. "This—that I am the pitiful butt and jest of all the gods. Even for this do I deride the gods, that I may be able to forget that they deride me. They buffet me round, and I know no rest from them. They have me for their joke; and all the things I seek to accomplish the gods make into nothing."

Then leaned the Archon softly forward. He said, "I will let thee go, O Trivialis. 'Tis now I understand thee."

And behold, he was very wide awake, if old.

And the trivial one went forth from the Stoa, and sought Euryophthalmus. But him could he not any wise discern, but, in his stead, coming directly upon him, that wondrous man of mighty stature, whom he had aforetime seen passing round the Altar to the Unknown God, and around about whose head of beauty was, as it seemed, a living light. And his eyes were like unto coals for brightness. Close behind him were the woman and the two young lads, also of a so great beauty. These did Trivialis later come to know

as Nea Diatheka and as Cheerfulness and Joy. But, at the present, he did not know them.

Then said the man unto Trivialis: "Follow me."

And the man led him into a private place, so far that at length Trivialis said (for he had begun to marvel): "Whither leadest thou?"

Said the man, "Into a road where this world prevaileth not. Come on further."

When they had gone yet further, then said Trivialis: "My name is Trivialis. Here make I my stand both against thee and against them which halt behind us. Speak, if aught thou hast to say. Speak. Let me be the sooner at liberty."

"To make thee at liberty indeed, it is that I would speak to thy soul, O Trivialis."

Then Trivialis felt in his heart a strange, glad confusion. Saith he unto the man, "Say on."

"I, like thee, did many years seek to hide the sorrow of my existence—both in the fields and in the markets, in money and in wines, in folly and in worldly wisdom. Yet found I surcease not.

"But, on a day, I heard from a philosopher that salvation is of the Jews, eternal happiness. Faring to Jerusalem, I sought there day and night for one that might instruct me concerning these things. But behold! there was none that could teach me, even among the very wisest, till—on a day—I found—"

Then brake in Trivialis (for in his secret heart he loved the Lord): "Thou foundest Jehovah. Thou foundest Him also very far away from thee. I too have sought Him, and I found Him—very far away. My soul is still in darkness."

The stranger looked at Trivialis with a sweet, sad ecstasy. He answered and said unto him, "I found Him, and He was close at my side. I found Him also a great beacon of light, yea for I found—Jehovah-Jesus, my Savior and my God."

The man stood silent for a very long time, gazing off in the way of Jerusalem.

Then he looked back yet again with even a sweeter light than hitherto into the eyes of Trivialis—Trivialis who had begun to feel strange stirrings in his blood, blind yearnings and unyielded obediences.

And the man spake to Trivialis concerning those things which Jesus had done and taught, omitting not one thing that was known to him.

But when he came to speak (which he did with so great a com-

passion) concerning the cruel treatment of the Lord, then declared his listener, weeping: "Would, O Jesus, I might have been beside thee, in thy trials, thy sufferings, there to render thee some bit of service! Would that I might have been beside thee, O my Lord!"

Said the man with the shining countenance, "There was one that truly was by and did help Him, yet by force. Yea, one and one alone. A giant from Cyrenaica he, Simon by name, known aforetime unto many both as Samson and as Solomon. He lifted up the cross, and bore it for his Lord. And much hath he suffered since therefor, O happy crucifer."

"My master's son!" cried Trivialis, "Samson, who was also Solomon, the son of Shem ben-Noah, ben-Adam, a priest of the tribe of Levi, and the family of Aaron—a type of Hebrew spiritual."

"Even he," declared the shining one. "Thou hast his genealogy indeed and in truth. And now I will teach thee further of thy duties, and of the way to eternal happiness and forgetfulness of sorrow, which way, namely, is Jesus. For behold, He and He alone is the way, the truth, and the life—life everlasting."

For some time then the radiant one did teach, and Trivialis questioned. And when the words of the Light-bearer were at an end, then Trivialis cried out: "Tell me, prithee, ere thou goest (if so it shall have to be) precisely who thou art."

The shining one said, "My name is Christopherus. Once I bore another name, but now—behold, they call me Christopherus, and so, pray God, they may always continue to do." And he beckoned Nea Diatheka, together with Cheerfulness and Joy, and presented them unto Trivialis. Whereupon he took that man to a gathering of disciples, and having heard his confession publicly, baptized him.

And after certain days, during which the now more earnest Trivialis consorted from time to time with Christopherus and with Nea Diatheka and with Simkah and Gheel, these latter four took shipping unto Italy and Spain, for, as Christopherus declared, there was work in every land which they yet had to do. And Trivialis asked that he also might become an evangelist. Then said Christopherus, "Wherever thou shalt stand, there speak unto him that is next thee."

And Trivialis, having watched their ship go over the great curve of God's sea, turned back into the Piræus weeping.

And came and abode at Athens, where he dwelt among the brethren many days.

But ever in his heart was a longing that he should repay that treasure which he had lost in dissipation. In divers ways sought

he to do this, but ever he came forth penniless and nearly without hope. Yet he would ever say again and again, "Shall I that profess to be a Christian fail to pay what I owe? Am I not steward unto Shem, hence also unto Simon of Cyrene? Then will I pay."

He went, therefore, unto the *epitropos metallon,* or superintendent of the mines (which were over in Laurion), and mentioned unto him: "Thou needest, I hear, yet further men in the Mines of the Free-to-choose."

Said the epitropos, "I need them."

Said Trivialis, "I will work for thee, but at such a price."

Said the epitropos, "Not for so much, but for so much."

Trivialis said, "I do bargain therewith. And when I have earned me such and such a sum, then will I come forth out of the mines again. For behold, I am a free man, and not under any compulsion that I should do this thing. But willingly I do it, for I choose."

And he chose, and went down into the mines, and labored diligently.

Nor was he dull or cheerless, but sang the song of the frogs out of Aristophanes, again hymned the psalms of David. And the hearts of his fellow workers, which often had been sore troubled, were uplifted into much peace.

And when Trivialis had laid by all the drachmæ needful to the paying of him he owed, then went he not forth immediately from out the mines again. For behold, he had formed a habit, to wit, that of loving money for its own sake. Therefore, after he had saved a sufficiency to pay his debt, yea and much more also, still he did choose to remain in the mines, and to hoard up more and more.

Therefore not wholly unscathed went he forth at last from the mines of Them That Are Free to Choose. And it happened in this way. On the day when he would indeed have gone forth, behold, a great cask of oil (which was there for the lamps) and which sat beside the place where all the man's accompts and all his moneys were, took fire. And he fought the flames valiantly, and saved his accompts and moneys. But his face was seared from his forehead to his chin. And he breathed the heated air, that even his voice forever after was altered.

Yet, when he wished, he went forth out of the mine.

Nor was either of the man's two eyes an-injured. But, from the day when his wounds were healed, behold, he found that he had no countenance at all, nor was in any wise (at least to outward seeming) made in the image of the Lord. But whenever he tapped with a

finger-tip upon his face, there issued a sound as it were of hollow wood.

And he went on a day to Corinth, there to exchange the silver of the mines for Roman gold. This, when he received it, he buckled round his body, and set forth unto Athens, and, on the way, being beset by robbers, he overcometh them, rejoicing and crying: "Behold! I am victor, and I am fain to laugh."

But he met in the road a harlot. And she blandisheth him, and getteth him well a-drunken at an inn hard by, and so robbeth him, and hath him cast out into the fields.

When he awakened, it still was night, yet not that night whereon he had met the harlot. In his head was a living flame of fire. And his hands and feet and all his limbs were stiff with cold.

He ariseth with difficulty and looketh all round, wondering who he now may be, even as the original Adam might have done when first he had tasted wine.

Then a knowledge and understanding of the earlier night began to fume and float in his flimmering mind. He passed an icy palm across his face and forehead. Then he felt the hard, wood-like scars, and laughed. "I am fain to laugh," said he, "but I laugh without pleasure."

After that he gave a sudden cry, a shrill ascending shriek of despair. For he had found that he had been robbed.

And the man beat upon his breast and declared, "My name, henceforth, shall be 'Conatus,' for I am but An Attempt—a mere effort, aye and a vain one truly. And I will never tell my former name to any man. Nor shall they ever find me out."

Then the man without a face stumbled and felt his way to a little spring that flowed hard by. There sought he to wash his distorted countenance, but could not, for sheer weakness.

And behold! he perceived coming up, on the far side of the water, one whom he knew with great sadness, even a friend of Christopherus, Thrasus Neus, a very shining person.

And he cried in his soul, "My God, my God, can I face this man—him that hath helped me so many times ere now?"

But Thrasus Neus came around the pool, and, having ministered sweetly unto him, so that Conatus's courage, by little and little, arose, he asked the wretch: "Who art thou, sorrowful brother?"

Then said the man, "I am one that did enter the bowels of the earth in sore travail, that I might become able to pay a debt I owed. And I got me all the silver which I required, yea and much more also,

and behold, even as I sought to save the silver and the accomptings from utter destruction, I did come by these hideous scars."

Then said Thrasus Neus, whose name meaneth "New Confidence," "I understand thee who thou art. Thou hast done the best thou couldst: no man more. And indeed it is often thus, my brother; as we strive to get silver and gold, even for the best of purposes, we come off hatefully changed for life and unrecognizable, and nevermore the same men. But suffer me now to assist thee."

He took him to a place where other good Christians abode, and there left him.

And Conatus remained with the brethren many long days.

CHAPTER XXXI

At the End Face of the Wall

Now when Simon, having begun to enter the mine by a strange Compulsion, and having gone past the various openings which led to innumerable galleries, at length had passed the last of these, he found that there were no further pegs whereon to place his feet. And yet he had not come anigh unto the shaft's bottom.

He gazed far up in the way whereby he had descended. And behold, at a mighty distance, there was a tiny circle of sapphire set with glorious stars—the opening of the shaft, or pit, against God's sky. Then he heard beneath him a groaning and words of direction shouted, together with foul curses.

And, down below, the vat began to rise in the shaft. It neared him, passed him swiftly, and sailed on up the passage. Some of the blocks of ore began to fall over the edge of the vat, when that was at a great height over him, and to strike, rebounding repeatedly, against the shaft walls. Then his heart was sore afraid, and, looking down, he saw, on the floor of the shaft, a patch of faint light.

So he said, "It is far to that light, but yet, to ascend again I dare not."

So he took a mighty breath and relaxed his hold. When he had recovered his senses, he was lying in the middle of a dim chamber in the rock. And a man, as it seemed of iron, stood over him, belaboring him unceasingly.

So the Jew arose, and the man that had scourged him, both spat upon him and spurned him. Others took away his poor apparel. And they gave him instead thereof (at the first) a breach-clout for

his nakedness. In after years it rotted, like a cerement, away, and fell from him, and never was replaced.

At the present they gave him also a heavy mallet and a chisel. Strange attire for priest of Adonai!

Alas, poor priest!

Then the man that had scourged him (he that had seemed of iron) bade him, with curses, that he should follow in the way wherein he would point with his finger.

Went Simon whithersoever the finger pointed.

And hurrying forms were all about him, some of men and some of women. And all were mostly, or else wholly, naked and were bearing burdens—some, baskets filled with gold-bearing rock, others buckets of ordure. Two men carried the half-corrupted corpse of a young girl.

And they passed (the Jew and his iron guide) through winding tunnels and dim, damp galleries, and exceeding narrow places which slowly arose and yet again suddenly descended, or that widened into torch-lighted chambers and afterward contracted into passages wherethrough the journeyers were wholly fain to creep on hands and knees or wriggle like imprisoned serpents.

There were rooms where tiny shafts came through the roof. Under some of these lesser holes, a fire of wood was burning. Through the shafts that had no fires, the fresh air came.

After a time they reached a room wherein could be heard, but as something far away, a continual sound of multitudinous clicking.

And from that they went on further, and the clicking grew louder, until they entered a chamber where hundreds of slaves were hard at hammering little chisels into the walls with wooden mallets.

Took the iron man the Jew to the end-face of the wall. Said he: "Take thy mallet and thy chisel: strike. Cut much ore away. Sleep on this straw. Speak never to any." He shackled a heavy chain on the Jew's ankle, and riveted the furthest link thereof, at a little way apart, into the solid rock.

Now lifted up the Jew his mallet and his chisel, and drave the chisel deep within the stone. And he felt, as he drave that blow, that it was the first of an endless succession of blows. His heart was heavy in his bosom, and he wished he were dead.

As he wrought on in the mine, he began to sorrow because he had not loved enough his dear wife and little boys. He had not had time enough (so he believed) to love them, to speak to them as tenderly as he had wished to do. No time? Why! why should there ever have been a minute for anything else?

And now?

Now there was nothing—God knew—but time. God's priest—

Tink! tink! tink!

Yea, there was time enow.

Tink, tink, tink! Tink-a-tink! Tink-a-tink, tink, tink!

How the multitudes of chisel-voices cried at him! like the sarcastic, eternally unsilenceable tongues of the Nations! "Tink-a-ty-tink! Tink-a-tink-tink. Thou-hast-time-enow! Thou-hast-time-enow, enow! Time enow, enow, enow!" The metallic subdivision of his endless space of imprisonment into moments, each little fraction whereof was a kind of eternity in absolute Gehenna, began to tease and craze the corners of his being. He tried, therefore, solely by way of diversion, to sermonize to himself.

"No time! no time! no time!

"So it will be when time is swallowed in eternity. We shall have had no time!

" 'I had no time' (we say) 'to love, to live, to bless, to think, to dare, to do. No time! no time!

" 'No time to pray.

" 'No time to be just.

" 'No time to ask forgiveness of a friend. No time, no time—' "

He began to believe that strange actual voices were calling out to him amidst the innumerable clickings of the chisels. Then, as he listened more intently, he perceived that the words which he seemed to hear were rhythmic to his own eternal chisel's clicking.

"You-will nev-er leave-this place-alive! You-will nev-er leave, you-will nev-er leave you-will nev-er, nev-er nev-er— You-will nev-er leave-this place-a-live! You-will—"

So went the chisel, accompanied by innumerable other chisels, over and over again, one unending, insane chorus. His heart grew faint and fainter, for he saw that the words must be true.

Well, what of the priesthood now? God, thou didst promise!

What sorry hierophant was this, a quivering, nigh naked wretch, with shackles, chisel, mallet, and certain interminable insane fancies—voices and the like?

God's sacerdos at the end-face of the wall! God's pity upon God's sacerdos!

It came to his mind that the task which Adonai had laid upon him had been too great for even his mountainous shoulders. Who was there, O El-Shaddai, could have stood beneath such a load? Was his flesh of brass, were his bones iron?

God's priest!

Let him pray. He prayed. They could not keep him from praying.

The procurator of the mines came up anigh to him—an officer of Cæsar, to see that all about this man (especially) was well.

All seemed to be well—for Cæsar.

The procurator spurned the Jew, and went back.

Certain nameless things called food were later doled out unto Simon—solely, be it known, for the sake of Cæsar.

He ate these morsels hurriedly, and then continued to work with unremitting obedience at the end-face of the wall.

After a time he was told he might sleep.

He quickly slept.

Or, rather, he became unconscious, and saw strange visions—there on his little flat patch of straw.

Did he really sleep? What is sleep? He had forgotten, truly.

By reason of the shifts, the work was ever on. Certain men were told at times that they might stop labor long enough to rest themselves upon the straw—but there was no interruption in the great task. They knew not whether, in the world above (these living corpses) day prevailed at any given time or night. The work went on.

The work went on.

There never was any stop in the multitudinous clicking, the taking out of gold. The mines were wholly Cæsar's. So also were the slaves. Cæsar must be pleasured. The work went always on.

Why did God permit such things?

There was never an attempt at the reformation of any slave. Neither was any thought at all (as it seemed) of actual punishment. There was only work and work and work—and cruelty. The scowl, the curse, the blow, the kick, the scourge, the hot iron—the sword, sometimes, for those who were not sufficiently compliant.

Others died without the sword, and they too went out with the ordure.

If a slave grew sick, he had to get well soon. Slaves were numerous, mines were crowded, the courts of justice in the upper world—they worked hard too (as it seemed) and were very successful.

Hail to the Roman law! The Jew had been told in Mauretania by Lampadephorus that the Law of Rome was the height of human wisdom, the ideal of justice.

Justice! Why did God permit— And God's priest! Adonai, thou hast forgotten.

So the priest without a temple travelled round the endless ring of the endless years like a mere blind ass at a mill. It was now

the eyes of him took that set expression on of insufferable sadness, such as all the world hath never seen (either before that time or since) in the eyes of others of the children of God—whereby, to the day in which I write, a man may be sure to know a Jew, or a man with Jewish blood in him.

Sometimes he had the impression—this intensely visualizing Simon—of alternately waking and dreaming, without being fully conscious of the change. From which condition there arose for the husband of Machashebethel certain inevitable consequences. Hence, in fact, he saw, even as Jacob of old had seen (only in moments of greatest depression) the glorious heavens flung open, and a ladder sent down into the earth—yea to the deepest depths in which he labored. And the angels ascended and descended bodily before his time-intoxicated eyes.

But mostly, for him, there was misery.

He lost no faith in El-Shaddai. He was still as constant (perhaps more constant) than when, as a lad, he guarded his father's sheep in Cyrenaica. He had, for a single matter, no leanings unto idolatry, nor any unto skepticism—of which he had heard in a kind of way from Lampadephorus. Still, his soul grew steadily more and more rebellious against his lot—a condition in which the seed either of idolatry or of skepticism may without trouble take root.

Oh, the wretched, the shameful, existence! Simon could behold nor plan nor purpose therein.

Still other changes now took place in the soul of that saddened giant of a priest. First, he began to remember too plainly the pans of gleaming gold which he had seen in the crucible-sheds as he came along through them toward the pit that led down into this mine. He remembered in fact the unspeakable wretchedness of his face, as he had looked in the golden glory of those vessels.

Three bright letters!

Had but one of the pans been his, in the long gone years, those letters (which had burnt down into his inmost soul) had never been set into him. So he thought.

And he felt once more the stirrings he had known in the days of Bethlehem and Petra, yea in those farther days as well, when, a shepherd lad, he had watched the caravans of horses go angling by the pastures of old Shem, laden with unimaginable merchandise. Yet, after all, a priest—should a priest drive caravans and yearn for pots of gold?

Three letters! Whenever the supervisor kicked Simon, he almost always shouted: "Thief!"

The Jew began to consider the ways of Apodoter, that magus of successful business. How he had known to use the long, strong fingers of silver and of gold! Simon recalled the oft-repeated temptings which that man had set before him. "Let the sheep alone, O Judæus, and let alone also the dyeing of plodders' garments. Instead thereof, trade. Mind not the little rules of Parush—contrary to the which thou saidst thou wouldst do when again thou camest to Jerusalem. But get thee much money. Then will the people of the whole earth take thee by thy garment's hem, and kiss thee, and worship thee—yea, more even than Jehovah will they worship thee."

Well, here was gold enow—for Cæsar.

Why not gold for Simon of Cyrene?

He began to consider the things which he (this miserable Simon of the endless strokes) could do with a quantity of gold—if only he were once more out of the mine.

He began to have visions, about this time, which were harder to distinguish from reality than any that had come before them, and in which, of a truth, his feet were taken hold upon, and he was worshipped. He began to think he saw his own bright sails on every sea, his caravans in every desert. Up every mountain climbed his strings of well fed asses. He beheld himself in boundless mansions, which were filled with sweet marmorean treasures. Cæsar himself came humbly into his presence, asking about the appointment of certain procurators to difficult provinces.

Then he recovered in an instant, and— What a jest!

At present he had but a little breech-clout. No, that miserable rag had rotted away long years ago. He had—nothing but three letters.

Still he dreamed of wealth and influence. Bars and ingots were up above in the sunlight! He had seen them, bars and ingots! There was strength in his arms yet, the strength of a thousand tigers. And the strength of Adonai, was not that his also? Had it not been his from the beginning?

His soul grew stronger even than his flesh. In fact 'twas filled with a wild, preternatural pent-up cleverness and sagacity. He could bring easily before him now all the teachings he had ever heard from Lampadephorus, from Apodoter, from Parush. There was nothing, as it seemed, which he could not remember and behold upon the walls of stone—written too in letters of bright and burnished—

Gold!

Gold! Such an aureate thirst!

"God give me gold," so he prayed each moment, "give me gold, God! And God, be thou my God of gold."

One day, as he worked, the supervisor of the place came in, and, with him, a man whispering in his ear.

Ophidion!

At first he thought (this priest of the Almighty) that he would kill them both. But that—that—would it not terminate forever his dreams of gold? He kept on cutting the quartz away as calmly as possible, and listened.

"Silence, Supervisor," hissed the snake (more loudly now). "Surely it is seen of all that I myself am *comites principis*. Cæsar holds me assiduously in his breast. Suspicion will not assail us. See! it is solely safe. But—silence, silence. Whisper it not, O Supervisor, without these mines. Silence!"

Then said he (and the Jew had much ado to hear him): "In Calaguris is a woman which knoweth thee and liketh. (He whispered her name.) Her would I have thee marry—I have paved the way."

"But I possess already a wife."

"Tell this woman not about *her*. And, for a justification, recall the Old Covenant. Had not even Abraham, God's very Chosen, more than one only woman unto his wife? And many another of the later Chosen also? That did they. And thou art no better than they were. —And when thou art married unto her, then cut her throat. Her jewels divide with me."

"I!"

"Thou."

"Knowest thou not I incline to the religion of Jehovah? Not as yet a proselyte, but still—it may be—"

"Fool!"

"I would not, at least, commit murder."

"Murder? What said the Lord unto the Jews, even as He led them to the Land of Promise? Said He not unto His very children and priests, 'Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill?' "

"Yea. He said—"

"And divide her beautiful jewels with me, for this, that I have paved the way for thee."

Then again said Sarcogenes: "Thou hast an enemy in Numantia, who is also mine. Him, when thou hast riches from the woman thou shalt kill, him kill also, that we both shall be revenged."

"Revenged!"

"Aye, revenged."

"There was One that taught—"

"But consider the Old Covenant: An eye for an eye, a tooth

for a tooth. Take thou at the same moment thy revenge and mine. As for justification, hearken yet further."

He went off into a great exposition of the Old Covenant, whereby he would have it appear that Jehovah was a god of nothing but revenge.

And having done this, he set before the man full greater matters also. And, each and every time, he did appeal to the Old Covenant, distorting and maiming the sense thereof to his own base purposes solely.

Then at length said he, "Thou knowest that the children of Israel, whenas they left Egypt, did take with them the jewels of silver, the jewels of gold, and all the shining raiment of the Egyptians, all of which most properly belonged unto the Egyptians themselves. And yet the Lord did say, 'Take them: ye shall spoil the Egyptians.' So that, thereby, we know that the Old Covenant doth justify, upon an extraordinary occasion, the taking of the goods of others. This justification I give thee not in arrears, but in advance, lest thy craven heart complain of what I am about to propose unto thee further—the greatest plan of all, both for thine own welfare and for mine." He whispered again in the supervisor's ear.

"And whither ought all the gold to be shipped?" asked the Supervisor, more loudly.

"Solely to the Subura, I tell thee, unto mine own insula. See thou to it. See that, in my house, in the second atrium thereof, it is safe bestowed beneath the mosaic floor. Stab then the servants who have brought the treasure with thee, safe bestow them also.—Then shall I come. And we shall live in sweetest luxury (thou and I, suspicious epitropos) having countless treasures, which shall be for us alone."

"But—shouldst thou, O Sarcogenes, weaken in thy project—"

"Weaken!" Ophidion laughed his old-time laugh of mockery and deep scorn. "I weaken!" He cursed at first loudly, then in a whisper. "Why! even of late (besides the time I have spent with great Cæsar) in Arabia, in India, in Egypt, Mauretania, Palestine—in all the lands where I have sojourned (and I have made me fools in all of them)—I have known no weaknesses. In case of offered violence—" He laid his great right hand on the left skirt of his cloak.

"I understand thee," said the epitropos, quaking: "but Cæsar—Doest thou this— Doest this because—thou lovest me or hatest Cæsar?"

"Love thee!" responded the mighty one. "I hate both thee and

everybody, man and woman. But hearken. See thou do the thing I order, and I will divide richly. If thou doest it not—''

''I fear Cæsar also.''

''Cæsar!'' The man burst into a rage of cursing. ''Cæsar! Cæsar is I. For yet I will control great Cæsar. But damn thee and thy doubtings. Wilt thou do as I bid thee, be rich and live, or wilt thou surely die?'' He drew his sword.

''I will do as thou biddest,'' cried the wee one of the mines. ''I promise—I swear to thee—I will even worship thee as a god. Only see! I say it shall be done, all things, in the very way thou desirest. The woman, the jewels, the man to be revenged upon, the gold of the mines and everything. Thou shalt see that what I speak is the sum and substance of a great truth.'' At that he fell upon the rock, and supplicated with hands stretched up.

Therefore Ophidion put away his sword, and the twain departed.

And when they had gone, the Jew looked far about the room—a thing he had done seldom. And he saw that another supervisor was in charge now, a man of kindly manner who had no cudgel or whip. The man came to the place where the Jew was working, and gave unto him further straw and food and certain kindly expressions, then went his way, until the procurator came in, and began to enter with him in talk.

They twain, thereupon, both the supervisor of the room and the procurator of the whole mine, began to walk about the place to see if all the slaves were working properly, and if all the rules were being obeyed.

''I tell thee, Philanthropos,'' said the procurator to him beside whom he walked, ''thou art far too easy on these toilers. 'Blows,' I say to thee, 'and then more blows.' And if any resist thee, or be in any kind unprofitable unto Cæsar, slay thou them instantly. Why not crosses in these rooms? There is plenty of space. And a slave or two crucified each day would be as a salutary lesson unto many others.''

Then related Philanthropos unto his companion (whose name, it seemed, was Anelemon, which, interpreted, meaneth ''Pitiless'') how that, in a certain city, many years ago, before that his own name had been changed from Misanthropos unto Philanthropos, he had been much vexed by a young slave of his (not strong) that had failed, each day, to break the sum of the stone which he, even Misanthropos, had cruelly required of him.

And he crucified that man.

''And lo, as the man was already perishing (having been upon the

cross three days) he cried in a piteous voice, "O Presbuteros, Presbuteros! Adelphos, mine own sweet older brother, hadst thou been here, or known these things, they would not thus have come upon me.'

"And behold, O Anelemon, 'Presbuteros' was the name which had been given unto me in my very early youth, by mine own infant brother, Agapytus, ere a band of pirates had stolen him away from us, the only brother I had had. And we never more had seen that son and brother.

"I cried to the man, 'Art thou indeed Agapytus?'

"He said, 'That I am, and once was I, as my name implieth, extremely beloved. But who art thou, then, thus to inquire of me?'

" 'I—I—I—I am Presbuteros, thine own elder brother, but whom thou couldest not heretofore know.'

"I hewed the cross down, unpinned the flesh, and would have succored my brother. But he saith, 'I perish. Thou also couldst not know thy brother. But are not all men indeed as brothers? Therefore we might truly have known.'

"Since then I have sought to ease somewhat the sufferings of the humble: is it not little enow that I can do for these?"

And Anelemon looked upon the man with amazement, saying: "Philanthropos, I tell thee thou art mad. Pitiest thou these filthy slaves?"

"I pity them," said Philanthropos.

Then laughed Anelemon long and with great scorn. When he had finished, he said: "I think thou shouldest be one of those foolish Christians. Believest thou any man could be thy brother that was not such in the flesh? This miserable Jew, for ensample, believest thou he could be as a younger brother unto thee? Or this bonded Greek, in shame and nakedness? Believest thou?"

"Listen, O Anelemon," cried Philanthropos, "I say to thee with all my heart and soul and mind and strength that I do love both these men. Though they be wretched workers in the mines, they are unto me as younger brothers. Would God I might die for them!"

Anelemon fell wholly silent, and the two walked away.

But Simon of Cyrene, who, in this fashion, had had his attention brought to the "bonded Greek," now gazed upon that man, and saw he was large and strong, and that his countenance, surrounded by a halo of bright hair, was filled, despite his wretchedness and labor, with cheerfulness and joy and inexpressible love.

And the Jew marvelled greatly, for he could not understand how such a look could be on the face of any man, least of all on one laboring in the mines.

Of a sudden, the Greek, striking a glancing blow on his chisel, knocked that instrument from his hand.

And there darted over to him an Ethiopian, also a slave, as far as his chain might reach, and sought with a certain bungling courtesy, to pick up the Greek's chisel and restore it unto him. But the black's chain suffered him not that he should do this thing.

And he turned back to his own work, but not or ere Simon had seen on his forehead the fearful word, imbranded, "Despicatus" (The Despised).

Then it came to Simon over and over that he must have seen that sunny-headed Greek before. He toiled the harder that he might perchance think where that could have been. But the more he tried to remember, the less it seemed possible so to do, and yet the more certain did it appear to him that he had somewhere, on a distant day, beheld this man.

By times he would have believed that the man was Lampadephorus. But Lampadephorus, he knew, was dead. Besides, was not this man far younger than Lampadephorus was, even when first he, Simon, had beheld him? Then it came to his puzzling mind that this was the person whose cross he had borne up Calvary. But at that he struck great chips fast out of the walls, so that many slaves began to notice, and he was fain to grow as it were aweary again. At length, it appeared to him that this was the man he had seen on Calvary, whenas the Crucifixion was done, and which had rushed westward, crying in a great voice: "Unto all the world, unto all the world!"

But howsoever these things might be, he knew that the image of the Greek had been from aforetime in his heart, and that his shining countenance was, for him, the Jew, like a sweet song from heaven.

So he loved the Greek, and cherished his presence.

And he began to have, in a mysterious fashion, a premonition of some great good that was soon to come to him from the sunny-headed Greek. Ah! That man would, on a certain hour, point the way from these mines, give him liberty and life! That was the blessed thing. He was, about this, quite certain. So superstitious and incapable of judging soberly, doth a man become that liveth deep down in the mines, and that laboreth at the end-face of an eternal wall.

It was just about this time that the sunny-headed Greek was, on a day, unshackled from the rock even by the procurator himself. "Thou shalt labor in a place apart," said the procurator unto him, "where no other man shall be beside thee, and where there is no ray

of light—except when one cometh to give dole, or new tools, or to see if the stint be accomplished."

Then took he the Greek away with him. And the Jew said in his heart, "This man was unto me as a younger brother. Would I might have succored him. Would also Messiah were come."

Not much later, the same man came and led away the Jew, and placed him in a room where he had to work upon the farthest wall in utter solitude from every living thing, and in absolute Tartarean darkness.

Oh the Greek! What a joy his presence had been! The worker at the end-face had not known he would so miss the Greek. And liberty—what of liberty now? Here was darkness, silence, confinement.

The man stopped chiselling, and harkened. As if from some imagined world, the far tink-tink of chisels! They were companionship, those sounds. There was yet life for him indeed. He thanked God that still there remained that tiny coupling of his life with life in others.

He worked again immediately, being fearful of the great darkness. Moreover, he must do his stint.

He used to chisel purposely in such a way that the sparks would fly from the wall in the greatest profusion. This light was also company to him. He was not wholly alone so long as the sparks lasted. Thanks for even the bright accompaniments of labor!

Then, too, there was God, Jehovah. Even in the mines, Jehovah liveth. "Thou art ever with me, O God." At times, however, he was very bitter toward Jehovah. He still believed, as in ancient Cyrenaica, on God, but his heart grew more and more rebellious. Was his flesh brass, were his bones iron?

His thoughts were also often on Jesus, that man for whose sake he had borne the contaminating tree. Would he had never seen Jesus! "Bear!" Well, he was, of a verity, bearing.

He knew, however, the sweetness, as well as the compulsion, of the word: he had not forgotten: and yet he was very bitter toward Jesus. Oh the day, the day, the day, he had come in from the northward country! The cloud of dust, the multitude, the soldiers, Jesus and His cross, the sudden fall of the Convicted, the swift command and the scourging of his own contaminate shoulders. Then the sweet word, "Bear." Let him think no more about these things. He did not believe on Jesus: Ophidion believed on Jesus.

So this man that did not believe on Jesus, told over and over again the gray beads of woe, the black beads of despair.

However, he recalled the word of Jesus repeatedly. But, each time, he said again: "No more of that. If only Messiah were come, with a sword that would put an everlasting end to sin and to the Nations! Oh Messiah! Messiah! Messiah!"

To turn his bewildered mind from torturing thoughts, Simon began to ask of nothing certain curious, eager, and rather unhealthful questions: for the problems of philosophy come natural to a man—slave or prince, or priest or poet, or whosoever faceth a stone wall.

What is sin? Why did God make sin, or permit sin to be? Why is suffering? For the matter of that, just who and what am I? Whence did I come? What was the genesis of my being? Why am I in this world of sin and suffering and matter, and whither shall I go, when I finally leave it? How can free will be, or necessity—both of which would seem to stand impossible? What is this world of sin and suffering and matter? Why did God create it? Why did God make man? Why did God make anything? And what is God, and what are matter, space and time?

For a very long period he pondered especially the nature of matter, space and time.[1] Now, Simon of Cyrene was not a master of these august subjects as yet, a fact he partly realized, and still he would take in his mind a question or so about them and roll it around and around.

He recalled, as concerning space, the views of an old master of Lampadephorus, who had said that space is "the home of all created things." But Simon asked of himself, "My soul, is not that truly a created thing? Yea, but its home, then, is that in space? If it truly be, then whereabout in space doth that home lie?" And the philosopher had said moreover (as Simon recalled) that space is immaterial, being not a created thing, but the home of such things. And, further, as it never had been created, it was therefore indestructible and eternal. "But," saith Simon, "why an eternal home for that which is only 'temporary'?"

Then began Simon to ponder something else: Is space divisible infinitely? "I will consider," said he, "the smallest bit of space I can think of. Even then I can think of a sub-division of that space. And so on without end. Any bit of space, therefore, is composed of an infinite number of smaller bits of space. But, if this be, then how is motion possible?

"For a body to move a mile, a furlong, or an inch, 'twere all the same, for it hath, in any case, to cover an infinite number of points,

[1] See, *inter alia*, Efros, "Problem of Space in Jewish Mediaeval Philosophy" (Columbia Univ.).

which, whatever the rate of speed, would require eternity for its performance. But motion doth actually occur in the world of space, which is also that of time." And so he had proved the very same thing to be both actual and impossible.

Then again, Is space movable?

Then again, Doth space grow old?

Then again, and this would puzzle him much more: "Is God omnipresent? For God is a spirit, therefore hath He no dimensions, no extension. But 'omnipresence' meaneth presence everywhere. And if God be not extended into any place at all, then is He truly not only not omnipresent, but He is not in any place whatever."

Then another thing—for he could not keep his mind from thinking, however vainly. "Spirit doth occupy no space, and matter is that which occupieth space. So far so good. But, then, how doth there come to exist a communication of any sort or kind betwixt my soul and, let me say, the solid walls of these so awful galleries. How can my soul send forth into space a ray which cometh back out from space again, and so informeth my soul about that wall in space?[1] What and where is the bridge betwixt no-space and space? How is the gulph crossable? It seemeth to be crossed unceasingly. Uncrossable and yet unceasingly crossed!"

Then, at another time, he saith: "My soul is *in* my body, and that which is *in* anything occupieth space, and that which occupieth space is matter. But my soul is not matter. My soul is in my body, and yet it is not therein!"

Then he said again, "If my soul is in my body (and that cannot be denied) then is it in *all* of my body? If so, then were a limb cut off, I should lose a portion of my soul. But the soul is indivisible, not being makable into two. Then again, if it be not spread in all my body, in what small portion of my body doth it lie? Can it indeed be anywhere, being not in space?" He thought not, but concluded that his soul was still in the bosom of God, a-dreaming. But how should a soul which lay a-dreaming in the bosom of Adonai dream such dreams? The walls of stone! The hammer, the chisel, the shackles! The failure as a priest!

"Ah, Adonai, Adonai! Wouldst thou permit that a soul which lay within thy bosom should dream such dreams?

"And if not in thy bosom, then why permit such dreamings anywhere at all? O Lord of my Fathers, do answer me!"

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[1] A prevalent theory of vision in those days was that the eye sent out rays to the object looked at, and that then these rays returned to the eye with information.

Placing the Lord upon a kind of trial—there at the bar of rock and chisel, hammer and three letters—he demanded again and again a reason, a reason. Like Lampadephorus of old, he would have a reason. Why, O Lord, didst thou make TIME, with all its consequences—motion, matter, space, sickness and pain and death, sin and abhorrence, the Devil, Ophidion? Why wast not content to dream thy sweet, timeless dream throughout eternity?

"Canst thou justify thy painful dream called 'Time'? A man, by thinking, cannot discover thee, O God, but might he not be able to comprehend a reason which thou shouldst give him? Come down in the flesh, O Adonai, that we may understand."

Thus far, Simon was only a human being astir about things which have certainly occurred to all, even children.

He soon, however, instead, began to recall more clearly and more in detail the teachings he had received on these and similar matters from the lips of Lampadephorus—teachings which had come from Milo and from Xenophanes; from Heraclitus, Empedocles and Democritus; also from Socrates—who had borne a certain resemblance unto Jesus. Most of all, however, he recalled Pythagoras, with his mystic number-symbolism, and Plato with his doctrine of ideas, and Aristotle, that man who had seemed to behold very plainly both this world and the next.

And now he began to discover (for the first time in his life) what he deemed to be absolute discrepancies between the implied old doctrines of the Jewish law and the clearly expressed theodicies and other teachings of the Greeks. At this he was troubled in soul. He therefore pondered deep and long, and not a hammer-blow he gave that did not start some new, strange, and more or less deplorable idea in his mind.

Then, one day, there came to him the idea of all ideas. He would reconcile the teachings of the Greeks with the doctrines of the Law. Both, he felt, were true, in fact unquestionable. They were therefore surely reconcilable. Then he laid this down as axiomatic, that the Law of the Lord is the source and standard of all truth. The Law was the root and trunk, Greek philosophy the branches. To harmonize the branches with the trunk, he constructed marvellous allegories. And on these he fully believed. Here in the mines it caused little difference, the use one made of one's intellectual energies. But after a while the allegories palled upon Simon. Then it was that he turned his attention solely to what he remembered of Plato and Pythagoras. His mind began to play strange tricks. He adopted the wildest systems of interpreting the Bible, and these he called *Gema-*

tria, Notaricon, and *Themurah.* By the first he converted the letters of a word (or passage) into numbers, then employed the arithmetic value of the whole to explain the sense of the passage. By the second, each letter of a word was regarded as the initial of some other word, and thus a cabalistic sentence was secured, which gave him an explanation of the word with which he started. By the last of the methods, the Themurah, he transposed the letters of a word or sentence, and so obtained enlightenment.

He also elaborated certain enormous systems of belief, which he called the Yetzirah and the Zohar.[1] By these he attempted to explain the natures of the finite and the infinite; time and eternity; matter and space (in a word, the world) and God. He supposed that, out from God, had come ten emanations, or Sephiroth, and so he attempted to bridge the impassable gulf which lay between him and his Maker, but the more he tried to build that bridge, the farther the Maker stood away from him. The old, old longing he had felt while still a shepherd boy with crook and psalter in the fields of far Pentapolis was again resurgent in his breast. To touch the very Lord himself, to feel of His garment, to behold Him, to know Him as he might have known a father or a brother! "Jehovah! Jehovah! That I might come anigh unto thee!"

Perhaps the long confinement, the incredible suffering, had forced some shadowy reflection of the Infinite into the chambers of his half-ruined brain. If so, he was never able to express that great reflection clearly. He thought that he sifted and separated, clarified and deepened, but, in truth, he only commingled and confused, darkened and superficialized. The long confinement and the hard servitude! He had strangely deteriorated.

He also began to notice (being here in the darkness alone, and, for the most part, wholly unguarded) an increasing tendency to hold long conversations with himself. He was often surprised to discover that, throughout the course of such a one-man talk, his lips were absolutely motionless—in fact were tightly sealed, so that he could not have opened them articulately, even if he would. He had too (at rare intervals) a feeling of inexpressible humility. He sometimes seemed to himself to be lower, far lower, than the stinkingest excrement. Did not even the buckets of ordure go up for a time into God's sunlight? Then, one day, he heard a voice adjure him: "Courage! for I am always with thee!" At another time, the voice came nearer, and said: "Is this microcosm or macrocosm?" And behold! the

[1] See, for example, Waite, "The Doctrine and Literature of The Kabalah."

solid wall of mingled rock and darkness cracked, as it were, and revealed to his night-intoxicated eyes a cosmophanic phantasmagoria of unimaginable brilliancy and effect. "The world! The world! Sunlight!"

When he had staggered to his feet again, the world had vanished, and he kept on chiselling.

Not long after, the world appeared once more. This time it stayed a while, and he saw it as never his eyes had seen or man or beast, or field or sky, in the world of actuality. In the bosom of the solid rock he beheld a symbolical procession of all the human forces and weaknesses which tread the stage of earth, and all in relation to his own mission: Kings and queens, which walked ever forwards backwards, being pressed on by the multitude; hunchback zanies in foolishest apparel but speaking straightest wisdom; long-bearded, gigantic philosophers stumbling, ever stumbling, because of the nets which they themselves had woven about their own feet; harlots (some in red and some in white); priests that laughed inwardly and priests whose faces were like happy prayers; lovers and murderers, sailors and farmers, scholars and children and courtiers and idlers and mere fools. And all in a kind of pompous-tearful allegory— But what an illuminating and time-explaining phantasmagoria, there against the widening end-face of an endless mine!

There was much to be read in the medley—as often there is in the sheer babblings of a man that is wholly mad. And Samson-Solomon, which is also Simon, of Cyrene, looked and did read.

And of a sudden he beheld at a little way behind the great welter of the strange procession—laughing and lagging and making gestures of mere levity and levitous contempt—Trivialis. Simon cried (but only, as it seemed, in his breast) "O steward of my father and mongrel of all nations, do I indeed love thee, or do I hate thee and despise?"

And at once he saw, at a little way behind Trivialis (forming as it were a peculiar group apart, for that they were not wholly of the multitude, neither of Trivialis), Lampadephorus and also that sunny-headed Greek which had formerly worked beside Simon in the mine, and then—a halting, shamefaced, priestly Jew, even the Rejected, Simon of Cyrene.

And Simon and the sunny-headed worker of the mine held sweet converse for a time, then quarrelled and afterwards went their ways alone. While all the time beside them went the spirit of Lampadephorus. But now, at length, the Jew beheld that what he had at first taken for Lampadephorus was solely a ghost.

And once again Simon looked and beheld there was yet another group that was rearward still. And he cried out also, yet once again (but, behold, as on that other time, in his bosom alone): "Berith, Leah, Machashebethel!" (Covenant, Labor, The Purpose of God). And he also cried, "Simkah! Gheel!"

And he saw that Berith held out her hands unto the Simon which marched before her in the procession, and cried unto him, and would have come up anigh unto him, but that she could not.

Then beheld Simon that, by her side, marched yet one other (and a sweetly-solemn) ghost, and one that did from time to time, give tender support and sweet succor unto her. The ghost was that of the Man whose cross he had borne up Calvary.

On another occasion, Simon beheld himself more vividly, and, over his back, a great bag, labelled "Gold!" It was for the reason of the bag that he that was in the procession saw not Berith, which is Machashebethel. At other times he beheld, in solemn allegorical procession, the virtues and the vices, the arts and sciences, countries, climates, seasons, things past and things present and to come, things for the eyes of human beings and things for the eyes of gods—all filing before him in a strangely contradictory and unintelligible, if illuminate, dumb show. A burst of heavenly music would sometimes come into the scene.

The pageants, from day to day, grew vivider and still more vivid, the music sweeter and more sweet. Then began the heart of Simon to fill with fear.

"O God," cried he, in his soul, "O God, O God! O God, let not this thing come upon me, but let me die! O God, O God!" And at that a golden burst of trumpets sounded and a blaze of noonday glory shot from pillared wall to pillared wall.

In the midst—Ophidion! And angels came and waited on Ophidion's will!

Then took Simon of Cyrene his chain and rent it, and would have run at the bright aerial creations, and cast himself upon them, even in the rock. But behold! there was a crash as if the day of days had thundered. The images all vanished. The floor moved and twisted, and Simon of Cyrene saw at a great way off, in a long apartment of the writhing mine, the forms of many calm slaves, a-working: they wavered a little and were gone. He clapped his hard hands over his eyes to keep the outer brightness from them, and then said softly (at least in his bosom, for he could not outwardly speak): "Thou hast cleft the mountains and the hills, and hast delivered me. O my God, my God!"

CHAPTER XXXII

Christopherus

It was but a little space till Simon of Cyrene could gaze again. Then found he him a-standing on a fragment of that gallery floor whereon he had toiled and beheld strange visions. He attempted to shout, "Nay-ree-yaw-hoo!" which is to say, "O Light of Jehovah!" but could not. The end-face of the wall had dropped, as it never had existed, and, in its stead, a dazzling emptiness of silent air. For his ears were stopped with the thunders which had come at the riving of the mountain, yea with the dropping of his walls were the gates of sound stopped up. Came shrill cries from an eagle far below: Simon heard as one in a sealed-up cell. He looked down over the stone whereon he stood, to behold the eagle! And drew back quickly, and clung to the solid rock through fear.

Then gazed he into the sky, the house of Jehovah. Turning clouds of bossiness, floating on crystalline void! Now the largest of the masses was shaped, as Simon believed, to resemble a mighty, if aweary, man. And the man swam on a mist of great cloud-ocean, bordered by a jagged shore of cloud-land rocks. The giant, turning his hoary head as he swam, sought for a haven amid the shore of stone. For a time he did well truly, even became jubilant and uplift. Then, out of somewhere—but who could say just whence—an influence arose which moved him (mocking) in the opposite way; the cloud-man's head sank upon the waters, it passed down within them, it was gone.

Simon adventured to turn his eyes once more over the shelf. Then saw he the thing which had been. Far down in the valley below, he beheld that portion of the mountain in which the mine had been hollowed out. Gone! All gone! Greed had done its uttermost. The galleries, the rooms, the shafts, the slaves, the supervisors, the higher officers and all—all gone. Only a bit of accidental shelf remained, fastened to the standing portion of the mountain. Even the end-face of the wall was gone down into nothingness. Solely the shelf on which he stood, the straight wall running high above it, and, over that, another and farther jutting shelf.

And when he had begun to comprehend the whole of the great thing which had happened, he attempted to lift a clear voice in words of sweet praise unto God, for at least the salvation of himself. But behold! there were no words that came into his mouth nor syllables upon his tongue. For the long years, the long, long voiceless

years, had left him inarticulate. Yet he said within himself, "All that hath happened unto me hath happened by thy will, O Lord: I have had no choice, but thou alone hast chosen for me. And what, O Lord, am I?"

Now it began to come into his mind that some of the soldiers of Cæsar might, by a chance, have been upon the solider portion of the mountain when the landslide came, and thus have escaped injury. If so, they might soon come and apprehend him. Moreover, although the mine in which he had been confined was the worst of all, yet it was not by any means the one and only. But every hill within his view was either pierced by some dark mine of wretchedness, or else (as he clearly foresaw) it would be so pierced upon some future day. How should he get wholly away from hence?

He looked down over the shelf once more. The eagle was yet a-weighing of its wings, though it had come a little higher up unto him. Far, far below the eagle, was a vast reach of verdant valley, through which a peaceful river ran. Ah, that placid river! With what an emotion had he gazed upon it (God knew how many years gone by!) before he had entered the shaft which had led down into these mines! Over the stream was, here and there, an arch of stone. Cæsar! Was he indeed out of prison? Had he truly escaped? Were there not prisons without walls? incarcerations without confinement? Beyond the stream were forests indeed, showing but tiny parellelograms of clearing. But, of a sudden, his eye was caught by a swiftly moving object, not transfluvial. There in the rolling plain which led from the river toward the new-fallen mount, it seemed to catch and cast the light around violently. Then he began to perceive that the object was longer than at first he had thought, and that it wound snakelike along a yellow trench of road which was deeply cut into the verdure of the near champaign.

A body of soldiers in steel and brass!

By straining his pore-blind and light-unaccustomed eyes he could just discern at intervals, both the soldiers' helmets and the heads of horses. The slide—it had been discovered!

He suffered himself just one more look at the awful flank of the mountain which had been removed by the careless and greedy hands of men, guided by the absolutely unerring, if unseeing, finger of God. Then he said, deep down in the chambers of his heart: "Thou hast left a little also, O Lord, for these, mine own, hands, to accomplish." So he put his muscles and his bones to the work.

The solid wall behind him, as it arose, reached out over his tiny

niche, stretching like a cape into the airy, infinite nothing. Now it was round that shelf of rock that Simon must go, fly-fashion, if he meant to escape from the niche and so from Cæsar.

That was impossible, was it not? Could a man crawl upside down, just like a fly?

And what of his case even then, supposing that a human being (not an ethereal ship) could, of a verity, circumnavigate the awful sea of graspless ether around and about that mighty cape of outstanding rock?

In what position might he find himself then? Perchance once more upon a place from which led no path.

So the man cast again about him, devising and devising.

The sun shone straight into his niche. The rock was returning the heat, and his head grew giddy.

Then a consuming thirst seized him.

He examined the surface of the wall, as though he had never beheld the side of his gallery before. Glittering particles grasped and held his eye. Gold! Life! Safety! Power! Ophidion! Revenge!

Leaping upon the cliff, he squeezed his stark naked flesh tight into the sharp recesses of the rock until it held there. Then reached up for further handholds. And so on and on until he had got to the outshelving portion of the wall.

Now a great vertigo came upon him. He perceived himself as though he were some other person, whose feet were of no, yet of the utmost, importance to him, working a tortured journey out above the abyss; hanging rigid there, upside down, by mere torn ends of fingers and bleeding sides of bruised and riven calves. Never did he cease to climb a little. To cling. To clutch. To press in. To slip along. Almost to fall, and yet to get tight hold again. And so on out to the end of the lower surface of the shelf.

Then it seemed to Simon of Cyrene as if the moments of his days were surely numbered.

He could not get back into his starting-place, yet neither could he go on round the thick end of the shelf.

For a moment he closed his eyes, and when he had again opened them he beheld once more the glitter of the gold in the rock.

"Wealth! Power! Life! Bone of thy people, Jehovah!"

He reached up like Samson of old around the shelf, caught a sharp strong point on the upper face thereof, half turned and grasped also with the other bleeding hand, hugged tight with knees below still, drew up yet a little farther on, caught well the hard chin

into the rough advantage of a hollow, let go both legs, and, panting, exasperated, exhausted, half weeping, and shouting, at least within his bosom, delirious, well-nigh sacrilegious words, dragged his twisted, tortured body to the upper portion of the ledge and so on to safety.

For a time he lay unmoving, and when he had come into his right mind again, he arose and looked about, and beheld there were numerous paths that led away, to all appearance into freedom, safety, and by calm and gentle slopes.

At about this time, the Jew believed he heard some sweet voice crying out anigh unto him—the voice indeed of Berith, Leah, Amahnah. It said, "Simon, Simon! Come unto me!" Then would the man have gone and searched vigilantly among the rocks which lay off in the way from which the voice had sounded, but that, at the moment, he happened to espy, at no great distance from him, the enormous crucible sheds where, as he knew, the precious metal had been extracted from the stone.

Then he ran with all his might down into the sheds, crying (for at last he had found his tongue) "Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!"

So these two—Simon and Amahnah—were verily close together, and yet, in a way, also a mountain apart, for Simon went not to search for her when he had once got into the sheds. Besides, he had thought: "It is only an hallucination. What should she be doing here? Is she not in Palestine, there only?" But mostly his mind was filled with the thought of gold, whereof he found a plenteous abundance. And they that had been in the sheds had gone off into the valley in a panic.

He gathered the nuggets up, the ingots also, and the bars—in mighty clankling, glowing, overheavy handfuls, in wondrous heaps and all he could carry. Then searching about a little, he found a traveller's pallium, two good swords, and a very wide scrip. Also a great leathern bulga.

He said, "I will even separate my wealth, putting a portion of it in the bulga, another in the scrip, yet another also where it will be more hidden. For behold! the Mines have been as a school to me in far more branches than one—and one of these branches, is it not Suspicion?" He therefore filled the bulga and the scrip. Then, taking a beam most excellent, and bending it with his hands about his body, made thereof a girdle, which held tight to him.

And he found both food and drink. And when he had well eaten

and drunken, he arose. And behold—a Roman soldier with a drawn sword, which was running up to attack him.

Simon wasted not time to speak to him, but struck with the heavy bulga on his head, that the brains ran out. Therefore the earliest fruits of Simon's Roman gold were solely sin. And sin without repentance, for Simon thought: "Behold, it is well I have killed this man, else he had taken this gold from me. But it I have earned thrice over in these mines, yea and tenfold also. And no man shall molest me, or take from me my gold."

From that time forward Simon of Cyrene loved bright gold with a more passionate devotion even than when he was in the Mines, for that he had fought about that metal, and had made it, in a manner of speaking, a portion of his blood. And from having protected the gold, he began to feel that the gold had protected him. So that, from that time onward, he loved with a love which language cannot express the look and the feel of gold, the power and the homage that are tied up closely in gold. Nay more. Everything that dazzled, or blazed, glittered, shone, glowed, sparkled, coruscated, or even merely twinkled, he loved devotedly, passionately, blindly, without the least reserve or concealment, and without cessation to the end of his years.

Yet, for the present, and first of all, it was needful to get beyond the possibility of recapture.

He slunk off into the wildest mountain paths.

By shut of eve he was well down into the valley, and for days travelled by narrow winding ways, in marshes that had no paths in them, or in shadowy, beast-filled forests. But into the roads of the Romans he would nowise venture, for a very long time.

Then, on a rainy morning, he went up to a village inn, called "The Inn of Them That are Happy," for the rain was turning fast to sleet.

But the caupona, looking on him with narrowed eye, said: "Lodging? We are filled up."

So he left that place, and went on to another. But there also the beds were full.

Then another. But there, likewise, the cubicula were filled.

And at shut of eve he went out into the country, and taking a Roman road, because the night was very dark and the sleet falling thickly, he came, in the course of many hopeless hours, unto a hulk of a building by the roadside, that had a lighted torch over its door and a legend in very pleasant letters—"Inn to the Golden Lamb." Out from the court of the building came sounds of great singing and laughter.

The Jew, therefore, for a little, hid behind a tree, taking counsel with himself what ought to be his course. All at once, from a side-door of the building, issued two men.

When these had come to the opposite part of the tree-trunk, one of them said: "I tell thee I am owner of this inn, and will have this thing my way."

"And I tell thee," the other man responded, "that I am of a good family and will murder neither man nor child for so paltry a sum as six sestertia."

"Sh-h-h," said the inn-keeper. "Not so loud. Make it seven then, make it seven."

"Seven it shall not be, but ten, for I am an honest person. That have I told thee now these many times. Is it in vain?"

"But twenty sestertia are all this man hath. If I give thee ten, I leave but ten for me, and I am owner of the tavern."

"Ten. Make it ten. I do know—"

"Oh then, ten. And see thou do a thorough job, and that none can catch thee, or, after any fashion, incriminate the master of the inn. Here be thy ten sestertia, and the gods confound thine avarice."

When the men were back into the house, the Jew for a time considered whether the shelter of such an inn were worth the hazardry.

At length he decided it was, "for," thought he, "I need not sleep in the place, but only take up my shelter in it, till the storm is by. Then will I off."

At this there came a sudden flood both of light and laughter, also sleet and rain.

Therefore he went up to the door, and, opening it, looked within. Then he entered—a silent building.

For behold, the laughter and the shouting had died away at sight of the Jew.

Said Simon to the inn's master ('twas one of them that had stood in the storm beneath the tree) "Master, I would have entertainment, at least shelter till the storm blows out."

Then came caupo, and looked the Jew over insolently from the wetness of his head to the muddiness of his feet, back into his flaming face. And he reached forth his hand and flung away the hair from Simon's forehead, saying: "We shelter here no such three-letter wanderers."

Simon, remembering the things this man would do for but ten sestertia, responded unto him: "I will give twenty sestertia for this that thou wilt shelter me for one single hour." He held toward

him in the plain light of a brazier, a shining nugget, worth far more than twenty sestertia.

The master looked upon the nugget with great concupiscence. But, at length, uttering not one single word, spat upon Simon. Pointing to the door, he made as he would spurn him thence.

Simon went not.

Instead, he drew from his bulga a glorious golden bar, worth half the tavern. That also he held in the sight of the landlord, beseeching with sad eyes.

The master wildly cursed and buffetted him. "Shall I lose my custom wholly?"

The Jew trembled and ran.

The sleet and rain fell still more heavily. Outside the circle of flickering light cast by the torch posed over the door, the night was sheer blackness and rainy solitude.

To go out far within that blackness, Simon believed not possible. He therefore slunk and slipped his way a very little into it, then, coming round and about, got well into the shelter of a mouldy hovel, and, pulling a few stiff leaves together, began to make pillow and bed.

He thanked God, after all. Here he could sit, or lie, and listen to the mirth which ever and again burst forth out of the building. And he could see the circle of ground whereon the tavern-torch was unsteadily shining.

At the rear of the inn, like a ghost, gleamed the white form of an altar to some god, while, far and near, in the dying or resurgent wind, the ice-clad boughs of trees clanked and clicked, and nearer and more near that clicking and clanking appeared to come, to come, to come—until, at length—

Simon of Cyrene sat bolt upright.

Of a sudden, with mighty clamor, a troop of Roman horse raced from the darkness to the circle of light before the tavern. Half the troop, at a word, went round behind the building, while the rest remained on guard before the front thereof.

Then the leader of the band, who seemed to be at least a centurion, dismounted and, going toward the door—which now had opened from within—cried shrilly: "Have ye inside there Simon of Cyrene, an enormous and dangerous Jew? He hath escaped the Mines of the Wretched, and beareth upon his brow three letters. In Cæsar's name!"

Hereat he strode within the tavern, and the door closed fast. Just one moment later, there came to the ears of the Jew the deep, rich bay of Molossian hounds, running.

Here they came, an enormous, bloodthirsty pack from the rear buildings of the inn.

Simon evaded them, ran and doubled, doubled and ran again, got headlong into streams, headlong out, dashed over a great stretch of level country road, and drew at length toward the outskirts of Numantia, just as the crow of cocks began to announce the coming of the all-revealing day.

A peasant there was, going to the city with a load of cider. Simon, at the peasant's word, clambered up next him—for he that had run was sore weary. "Thou art a big man," said the peasant, "yet these oxen can of a surety draw both thee and me. Why, thou art great enough for Hercules! Hast not somewhere a club? All soaked up too, and scratched with brambles. Why! big as thou art, thou art shivering and looking all round, even as the little Maltese dog I have behind me here in a basket. Lost is he, and I picked him up along the road.—But hold! thou canst not fool me. As the wind did blow, I glimpsed beneath thy hair three letters. I am not a man easily deceived. Get therefore out—out—out! Slave! Thou'rt a stingy, cut-throat thief of a Jew. Convict!"

So the Jew remained out of Numantia, and, crossing a river, would have entered Calaguris, but that, as he traversed a field of wet weeds, he dropped down into the vegetation for weakness merely and became fast asleep. Awakening in the night, he heard soldiers talking to a traveller (a person, it seemed, of distinction) on the Roman road hard by.

"Hast seen one Simon of Cyrene? An enormous Jew, O Master, with 'f-u-r' upon his forehead. A dangerous fellow, else had I never troubled thee concerning him."

"I have not seen him," quoth the traveller, speaking the Latin of Rome, "but I dwell within these parts, and when I have reached my villa, I will straightway tell my servants, that all may scour the country round about. The fellow shall not escape full justice."

And the Jew found frozen berries to eat, and a foul pool to drink from, and shot off northward through the marshes, streams, and gloomy woodlands, and having at last, when many days had been fulfilled, got into a strange and little settled country where no Roman roads were, he came out into a byway which plainly had been builded by the people of the very land themselves. And there he beheld a young child threatened by a serpent. He slew the serpent, but the child, who had not been fearful, cast a little stone, which struck Simon over the heart.

So the Jew went his ways.

And passing through a village at nightfall, he was taken by soldiers, from whom he brake. Being hotly pursued, he struggled along in breathless haste, scrambled up straight stone walls, leaped down into a garden, ran out through an open gateway, and darted, darkling, within a dread and seemingly illimitable thicket.

After a time he emerged on the border of a lake. Crouching, shivering, listening!

Hearing the soldiers close, he dashed forth into the water.

For a while he swam on, and the moon arose. He was bewildered, growing each hour both more a-cold and weaker. Could they not easily behold him, the soldiers, here on the water in the clear moonshine? Suppose he might be able to reach the farther shore, would his enemies be even there? Why should he not permit himself to sink, to close at once this journey of which there could not be a happy ending?

At length he thought he must surely throw aside part of his gold. But at this his feet struck ground, and he stole off into the rushes and the reeds. And he lay in them, shivering and very wretched, till the day was at hand.

Then he looked forth, and saw that, at a distance, there was rough ground, and that, farther, it was coming on to snow. Still he lay hid.

Yet, when he had become greatly an-hungered, he began to move about a little, and to peer once more between the rushes, to see if, haply, the road were clear of soldiers.

Seeing no enemy, he ventured to arise, but heard some sound and drew back down again. Then, perceiving that the mischief-maker was merely a hawk, which, through the tangled underbrush, was pursuing a little quail, he re-arose.

But at this there came another sound, much heavier. The Jew, believing himself lost, drew both his swords, and would have dashed out upon the invader, but that he suddenly perceived before him that sunny-headed Greek whom, long ago, he had beheld at work in the mines.

Then the Greek, smiling and holding forth his naked hands, said unto him: "Brother."

Now, at first, the Jew answered rudely. But later the tears ran down his cheeks, and he could not talk for mere joy.

So he went up to the Greek, and catching his hands, clung to them as a child. Yet was the Greek by far the younger man.

"I knew thee in the mines," said Simon of Cyrene.

"I thee also," returned the Greek. "My name is Christopherus. Though a Greek, I was born in Jerusalem."

"I in Cyrene. My name is Simon."

Each went on to tell the other about his manner of escaping from the mines, and all his melancholy dole of things which had fortuned both before and after that event. And behold, the story of each was, to a nail, a counterpart of the other's. Each, for a single ensample, had, on a time, been forced apart and then kept separate from the dear wife of his bosom—Christopherus from Nea Diatheka, and Simon from Berith, which is also Amahnah and Machashebethel. And each did hate with a mighty hate Ophidion and Cæsar—for Ophidion it was that had also caused the imprisonment of the Greek, and had likewise sent to some seclusion his good wife—Christopherus knew not where. Also, the Greek, just now, had taken the Jew for an enemy, even as Simon of Cyrene had misconsidered him.

Then said Christopherus, "Let us cast our lots together, for so we may be a comfort each to each, as he hunteth for his wife, likewise a protection whenas that Human Serpent or the Prince of the World doth seek through any of his officers to waylay us."

So it was agreed, and Cruciferus and Christopherus fared along together, intending to journey more and more into the North, which is to say farther and farther from Cæsar's mines, hoping that, after a time, the world might change, becoming more favorable unto them. Then they would endeavor, both, to find again their wives.

"And indeed much recompense is due from the great world unto us," said Simon, "for that an accursed and soul-destroying hole I surely did find those mines. This, too, however, I have to accredit—in the far accompt—not solely unto Cæsar and Ophidion, but, in a way, unto a certain crucified criminal, whose cross of contamination I once did bear, a Nazarene—"

"A Nazarene!"

"Thou sayest. A Nazarene: of whom the less we discourse the better. For, up that detestable hill—"

"A Nazarene—hill—the cross—thou sayest—"

"Speak not concerning Him," objected the Jew, and considered without delay other things, as the wolf-tracks in the forest where they walked, and in what place they twain had better stay away the night.

And it came out in their counsel, each with each, that the Greek was much afeard of wolves, whereas the Jew, even as shepherd-boy in Cyrenaica, had killed a many of them, yea, even with his empty hands had he slain the largest—and, upon a time, a lion.

Yet, ever as they moved along, the Greek saw more and more that the Jew was aweary and that his feet stumbled, and that he soon

must rest—for that his late adventures had been too great for him. Yet Christopherus understood that they ought to go much farther, for that the way where now they travelled was ill beset by beasts and of many kinds.

All at once the Jew fell down in a heap, saying: "I can go no farther. My strength, it has left me. I am also nothing but coldness."

So they made them there, amid the snow, their places wherein to sleep. And Christopherus said, "I am very warm, O Simon of Cyrene. I would thou didst take my heat. See! I will give thee my mantle."

But Simon suffered him not to give his mantle up.

But when, in the later watches of the night, the wind blew, then Christopherus, who had not slept, cried out from his bed: "Dost thou well, Simon of Cyrene?"

Simon answered, "I do not well. I suffer, and am all a-cold."

So Christopherus, without one word more, went and wrapped his mantle about Simon of Cyrene (in addition to the Jew's very own) and tucked it all about him with soft hands and great tenderness.

And the Jew fell asleep within the garment of Christopherus, and slept as in the very heart of God.

And it chanced that, in the farther courses of the night, whenas the hours did blow their coldest, and Christopherus kept lonely watch above Simon of Cyrene, there dodged in from among the trees of the snowy forest, a great, gaunt, shambling wolf, with deep furrows in his panting sides. And the wolf did deviate from tree to tree, snuffling and snuffling. Then saw Christopherus the wolf, which sprang at Simon of Cyrene.

And, though the heart of the Greek was sore afeard, yet the man grappled with the wolf, that he might protect his friend.

And he slew the wolf, and hid the carcase thereof.

And the Jew slept on.

Nor ever did Simon of Cyrene know that his friend had kept a great danger from him, but, to the day of his death, was ignorant of this matter. But the Greek said unto himself, "I must, on a time, attempt to speak to my friend about Christ. How shall I do this?"

In the morning, the Jew arose, and was stronger and high of spirit. And the sunny-headed Greek did minister unto him and help him much upon his way.

And the hearts of the twain were knit, each unto each. Simon

would say to his friend: "Let me go upon the left side of thee, for that is the side on which is thy heart." And they told each other pleasant stories of long-time friendships, which in few cases had been broken—of David and Jonathan, Abraham and Abimelech, Alexander and Jaddua the High Priest at Jerusalem, Achilles and Patroclus, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Solon and Peisistratus, Socrates and Alcibiades, Epaminondas and Pelopidas. Delicate thoughts unfolded themselves within the minds of the two friends, like flowers of sweetest hue and pleasantest perfume.

And each learned from the lips of the other many true things and useful, even as, upon a time that was not more golden, Simon and that other beauteous Greek, the shining Lampadephorus of Athens, had learned, each from the words of the other's mouth.

And the Jew grew stronger of body and of limb, as well as in spirit. But whenever the Jew would fain have contested with his sunny-headed companion in any war-like exercises whatsoever (saying "We must keep our practice up") then would reply unto him Christopherus, sweetly smiling: "I have no sword, and will not borrow one of those which thou didst take from the Romans, O long-armed Dimachærus: for see! I would not fight thee, even in play, nay not with a hollow sword and pointless, for I do love thee truly, yea better than a brother love I thee. Also, what is the need that any man should learn to kill?"

And it seemed to the Jew sometimes that Christopherus had within him some hidden spring of happiness, for all that the Greek did say was gently and sweetly harmonious like different lovely airs played to be in some relation, one to the other. So, whether they passed along in the bright Valley of Vision or over the dark Roughlands of Experience, he hearkened gladly to the ever-pleasing syllables of his friend.

When many days had been fulfilled, the Greek thought: "I must speak, soon, to Simon, about the happiness coming only from Christ."

At this he espied, at no great way before them, in a corner where two roads met (as was the custom) a Roman tree, whereon, long days before, some poor criminal had been hanged.

He believed this would be an excellent place wherein he might speak. And, for that the Jew had not noticed the cross, Christopherus, even before they had reached the spot where the cross was, began to talk about the numerous prophesies the Jews had received concerning Messias. Natheless, in his haste to reach the cross, the Greek outstrode the Jew, all the more that Simon, striking his foot on a stone, stumbled and had well-nigh fallen.

So the Greek called back: "Simon, Brother, thou knowest I love thee."

The Jew stopped stock still. Looking up, he beheld the cross, his friend, very happy, with outstretched hands, beneath it. Then Crucifer us cried, seeing Christopherus would have spoken: "What! thou also! Worshippest thou a cross, that instrument of infamy, of death, of hell? Thou too, art thou idolater? Get, rather, up yonder, where an altar is, which I see, erected to some or another heathen god, either adulterous Jupiter, or robbing Mercury, or else that chief of shameless harlots, the naked Venus. But worship not a cross."

Said Christopherus, "Simon! I marvel not thou dost hate the cross, for I who was also upon the hill, did see thee bearing for the sake of Jesus—"

"I? I bearing? The hill? I bare and have borne nothing. All who say I did bear the cross of Jesus, there or in any place at all, they are both liars and liars' sons. It is a myth, a myth alone." For so did Simon of Cyrene (like that other Simon, many years before, upon whom also, as on a great rock, the church of the Savior was founded) deny his Lord, and would know nothing concerning Him.

Said the sunny-headed Greek, "Simon! Friend!"

But Simon, "Away with thee, idolater! Away, I say. Get hence, and be accursed forever!"

"Away? From thee?"

"Away from me indeed. For I am son of Abraham. Damned forever be thy kind. I do hate thee, both thee and that servant of the devil, Ophidion."

At this, the friend of the Jew could speak no longer. Yet still he held out pitiful hands, and would have come anigh Simon.

But the Jew cried fiercely, "Seest thou not I am doubly armed with Roman swords, and am much stronger than thou—also better versed in combat, having been instructed of eld by a far manlier Greek, even Lampadephorus of Athens? Be gone, therefore, and tempt me not. Knowest what steel is? Art on thy way?"

Said Christopherus, turning: "I am on my way indeed. And I do know what steel is, but thee I understand not. O friend! O brother!"

But at this, Simon of Cyrene made as if to run upon the slow Christopherus with his twin blades. And Christopherus hastened, taking the westernmost forking of the road, looking not back at any time, but only down at his two shambling feet, and moaning of Simon.

When a man hath done some passionate, foolish thing and all is over, he, next moment, doth cool a trifle, and, the next after,

attempteth to reflect, and to seek for a cause in some person other than himself, or some semblance of justification. So was it with Simon of Cyrene. As he watched Christopherus, he said: "It was wholly necessary I should do this thing. For lo! in their hearts this man and that other Nazarene, Ophidion, are alike." Yet, as he spake, he did doubt his own words.

By now, the Greek was far in the distance—a tiny figure, with, as it seemed, a bright light playing all about it. And the Jew watched both the figure and the light, and watched them and watched them, until they had vanished utterly.

And all the while he had been standing very straight and very still upon one single spot. But now, of a sudden, he bowed himself. And casting his mantle round about his head, he wept sore.

CHAPTER XXXIII

At the Houses of Them that were Specially Sinful

When, at length, Simon had become master of himself, he took the eastern branching of the road—a harder and more precipitous way than that which Christopherus had chosen, although, too, as Simon could see, the path of the sunny-headed Nazarene was beset by numerous difficulties. Simon said in his heart, "At least I will let my association with thee, Christopherus, be as a school to me; for thou hast said to me many bright and beautiful things."

And, at another branching of the road, Simon came upon one in shining apparel but with filthy rags showing beneath. The fellow said that his name was Neomathes (or The Newly Learned). After much converse with the person, Simon requireth: "Point me, I prithee, a way into a region where much wealth may easily (and yet honestly) be come by." Said Neomathes, "Go yonder road. All who take it prosper. Moreover, it is easier by far than the other, being broad and blossomy, as well as smooth and yielding to the feet. Concerning that road first learned I from the lips of an ancient friend, a certain Lampadephorus."

"Lampadephorus! Saidest thou Lampadephorus?"

"Lampadephorus. Knewest thou him?"

"Knew him? Yea, verily, and loved, and well-nigh worshipped. But too much had he learned about Cæsar."

"Thou sayest truly, and in consequence perished at Jerusalem." And on he went, with many a shining reminiscence about the old

Greek Master, while the Jew, with mouth agape, listened as in a mighty dream.

Until, at length, of a sudden, Neomathes happened to remark: "So, as thou must perceive, these thoughts and sentiments are like pure gold." Whereupon the Jew, throwing up his hands, declared: "Gold? Gold? I had forgotten my purpose. Saidest thou yonder was the way?"

"Stay a moment. There have lately been discovered rolls writ by the very hand of Lampadephorus himself. These I have in my bosom."

But the Jew cried, "Saidest thou yonder was the way?" He took the broad, bright road.

But behold! the breadth of the way and the blossoms did not long last. And many a sharp stone came to lie beneath his feet. And the road led off into a country of which he had often heard, yet knew but little—a land in which there dwelt a strange diversity of distorted creatures. He prayed for the welfare of that land. And as he passed along the road he gave great alms and was high compassionate to many, even unto them that had by their own countrymen been neglected. For such was the use and custom of his people everywhere, in whatsoever land or nation they might be sojourning.

At shut of eve he came to a village where all the abodes were stately and fair to look upon, saving only one. Now that hovel's stones were yellow and green with age, its door-frame creaked in the high wind, its roof was thatched with fluttering weeds and close-packed, foul-smelling leaves. A peacock squawked in the yard. Said the Jew, "As I can guess, thou art a house of but one single, half-provided apartment—a thin-walled room and that with a rough stone for a hearth in the floor's center, underneath that half-smoked perforation in the middle of thy roof. But it is meeter that I, a convict from the mines, rest in you, O humble abode, than in yonder dwellings of the great. May there, in this little hovel, be a hospitality for me."

At this he heard some somber sound behind him, and, turning, beheld a tall, lean, upright man, black-gowned, black-caped, and long-mustachioed, who walked stiffly and with measured stride, and carried a very large head with an insolent manner.

Simon of the degenerate soul said unto him, "Knowest thou who dwelleth in yon cottage?"

The man looked at him with far gaze, and, after a time of dignified consideration, replied: "Yea, 'tis even I, Superbus, who dwell within that mansion: I, Superbus, son of that other Superbus, of

whom thou hast doubtless heard." His voice, as he spoke, grew round and full, satisfied and domineering.

Said Simon, "I had thought to take mine inn up with the owner of that dwelling for this night."

Superbus: "If thou art a stranger (as well it seemeth thee to be) thou hast chosen better than thou understandest. Great as I am, I am ever willing to forget my true largeness and to show some trifling kindnesses unto those less fortunate than myself." His breath was hot with pride on the cheek of Simon of Cyrene, and out of his stiff hair puffed fragrances of nard and malobathrum assyrium, affected by many kings.

Simon: "I am much beholden unto thee. I seek but a shelter for the night, and perchance a little wherewith to sup and also to break my humble fast."

Superbus: "Thou mayest have those things, humble one. But tell me who thou art—though, truly, thou canst not be much."

Said the Jew (who never at any time would conceal the name of him): "I am a weary traveller. Some have called me Solomon, some Samson, and others Simon, of Cyrene. I was aforetime shepherd, but now am about to become a merchant."

Said Superbus, "It is well. Yet wait, and content thee not to enter in before me, for this is the mansion of me, myself."

So saying, he stalked into the wretched abode, and the Jew, having stooped in after him, looked round upon the room—which was bare of almost every sort of furniture, saving indeed one single piece—to wit, a handsome wife.

And the wife of Superbus (whose name, as her husband stated, was Superbia) when her slow, but lofty, eyes had descended and beheld that her husband's guest was a good-for-nothing Jew, then gradually (though her orbs were still upon him) lifted up her eagle's nose and her high-arched brows, and marched out through the backmost door of the room, and so was no longer plainly visible—though Simon believed that, now and then, he perceived her listening at the door's hinges. And she sighed (so he thought) from time to frequent time, for that the wind was cold.

Superbus himself was fain, therefore, because of the defection of his spouse, to set the evening repast himself—the which he did with muttered curses beneath his hot breath, and mumblings about the inconveniences produced by strangers whose entire lineages were set but little store by.

And when the meal was at last prepared, they twain sat down. And Superbus had porridge and old bread. But Simon only a

mouldy crust. Said Superbus, in good cheer: "Be happy that thou hast the crust (small as it is) from the fingers of Superbus."

Said Simon, for he greatly marvelled: "I would humbly ask of thee a question, O Great One."

Superbus said, "Say on: I may answer thee."

Said Simon, "I perceive thou hast an excellent opinion of thyself, the which (as I be strange and ignorant) I am at some loss to comprehend. Deignest thou, therefore, to explain this matter unto me? Why holdest thou thy head so high, and why treatest thou me, humble sojourner though I seem (I say not 'humble' surely) with words, signs, gestures and great countenances of mere contempt? Who art thou indeed, Proud One? I do adjure thee that thou tell me, for I fail to understand thee."

"Who—am—I?" questioned Superbus, striking himself a haughty whack upon the bosom at each of the words. "Who—am—I? Thou art indeed most ignorant, fellow, as thou thyself didst observe, if thou knowest not the sole and single answer to thine own question. But I will have pity upon thee, and be kind to thee, and look with compassion on thy lack of knowledge. And I will tell thee precisely (although it is not fitting that I do so) as to who I am.

"Listen, therefore, and remember, for twice I shall not say the words. I am Superbus, Superbus the Younger. Son indeed am I unto that far greater Superbus, Superbus the Elder, the very father, the progenitor, the awful ancestor, of myself."

"And he—thy father—who was *he*, then?"

"He? My father? Who was my father? Why he, my father and progenitor, was even that well established personage that once beheld a man whose maternal uncle once upon a time had seen a soldier that had an intimate acquaintance with a certain person who had related a well-attested anecdote about some lady who—long, long, long, very long ago—had received a smile from Cæsar."

Then, at this whispered impartment, the Jew could not, of a truth, contain himself, for he felt so suddenly tickled that he laughed straightforth helplessly into the proud features of his host, and altogether cacchinnated, and slapped his lonely loins, and shed sweet tears, and, rolling down over, lay eagerly helpless on the floor—until, indeed, he saw the wide-eyed Superbus arise and stand with folded arms above him.

At this, he arose very quickly, and suddenly went into a great rage, and, being weakened in his character by all the travails he had had in the terrible mines, and his tribulations in the journeys which had followed, he suffered his words to flow unshepherded, crying:

"Thou? Thou a great one? Thou puffed up son of nothing! Thou? What art thou, then, thou by the side of myself? For I am truly a son of Abraham. Ere thou wast born, thou swollen fool of an idolater, I was a priest unto the Most High, the one and only God, He that ever was and is and always shall be, whose reign hath never a beginning and shall have no end. I am His priest; thou, nothing." And so he stepped outside the door very scornfully, followed by Superbus.

And Superbus had drawn a great sword, and he shouted to all the neighboring villagers, as it were with a voice of a horn: "See! Help! Come! It is he, even Simon of Cyrene—man of three letters—blasphemer of the gods. Kill—help—kill him!"

And the villagers came running, some with one thing some with another, so that Simon of the proud, but hasty, foot was fain to gather himself together and to run with violence.

And he went down into a desert place, and dwelt there many days. And all that was in his heart may no other man know.

But, after a time, he came forth into the mountains which stand between the Vascones and the borders of Aquitania. And he prayed for the welfare of the land into which he was now about to make his pilgrimage.

Into the deep folds of the mountains entered he, and, where he entered and all along the way, the walls of the road were black and bare and very forbidding, so that his face was set, as he sometimes believed, eternally unto unyielding stone. Yet he came, at length, by dint of much toiling, to a little valley in the midst of high mountains and overrich with a soil that the all too frequent storms had torn down off their bare, unwilling sides. Yet, for all the richness of the valley, the people of its only village appeared to be utterly downcast and without so much as even the expectation of a hope. So, as he passed along the street, he gave great alms and was high compassionate unto many, even to them that had, by their own countrymen, been neglected. For such was the use and custom of his people everywhere, in whatsoever land or nation they might be.

And the Jew said unto himself, "Seeing I came by evil fortune at that former town, insomuch as I chose the littlest hovel in the place to stay in, I will seek me here the largest of all the habitations. And there will I take up mine inn, so be the owner will suffer me. And may there be a hospitality for me in that house."

He chose his house, the largest in all the village. But indeed all the other houses were very small and humble.

And went up anigh unto the house he chose, and saw that the yard about it was as bare and hard as iron. And before the door was a tall, dead oak, wherein a gloomy raven croaked continually.

Then the Nugget-bearer's heart sank. He said, "I have made once again an unfortunate selection. For see! I am certain to despise whatsoever man it is that liveth in this place."

Yet, for that he knew not surely any better thing to do, he went to the door and knocked. "Who's there?" clicked a voice like the sharp snap of a trap.

And behold, without awaiting answer, there came to the door a personage, at one glimpse of whom the Golden Wanderer stepped backward and thrust his hands before his eyes.

Wheedled the man, "Most noble lord, come straightway in." Now the fellow was the mold and image of death, save only that he had but one eye, and all about his face were blind, deep pockets. And his garments were poor, fringy clouts from a single smock, pinned together with long thorns. His bony hands stretched outward unto the Jew, upon each a supernumerary finger which twitched and grasped continually. Twitched and grasped, and grasped and twitched, as it were fastened to a restless nerve running back to an old, evil heart. "Be assuredly welcome," went on the death's head. "If thou needest assistance—"

"A travelling merchant I," declared the Jew, in faltering tones. "Shelter is my one requirement. My name, it is Simon of Cyrene."

"Simon of Cyrene!" cried the death's head, with gladness. "Have not I heard of thee before, and also of thy kinsman, Alukah, the horse-leech, he that liveth in Rome? He and I have oft transacted profitable business together. Thrice welcome, then, also ten and twenty times, O Simon of Cyrene. My name is Avaritius." And he grasped the Jew by both his arms, close up to his heart, and pulled upon him, so that the Wanderer was astonished—for he had never felt so violent a clutch before.

And Avaritius would have drawn the Jew straightway into his house, but that a neighbor's boy ran up between them, crying: "Avaritius, thou hast cheated!"

"Cheated! Waster of words!"

"Aye, indeed! When I had got home with the barley which thou, for gold, didst measure unto me in a measure, behold! my mother saw that the bottom of the measure was dinted deeply in, and likewise one of the sides. Then, too, when thou didst level the grain across the top, thou usedst a well-warped board with its rounded side toward the barley, so that the barley was thereby deeply hollowed.

And now my parents have made me return unto thee, and say that we will not deal with thee any more, but to ask thee back our money."

And behold! Avaritius (though his step was soft, and slipping, and sly) beat the boy, and sent him away screaming, and with much of his barley spilt. The man did gather up the barley carefully, and bring it back into the house.

The heart of Simon, therefore, failed him. Yet, being weary and not wholly recovered from the fright he had had at the house of Superbus, he thought: "I will stay at least the night here, so be the man will suffer me."

Avaritius clutched the Jew again by the arms and gathered him toward him. As the twain entered the door, he said unto him: "Tell me, where wast thou last?"

"At the house of Superbus and his wife Superbia."

Avaritius made thereupon a crisp rattle, as it were dead bones clattering. "So there thou wast! The wasters! Come!"

He led the way, all round and round in the mansion, from vacant room to vacant room. When, at last, they had reached a tiny closet, or hole, of an apartment in the backmost portion of the house, the host declared: "Here, and here alone, live I."

"Livest thou, then, not in all the apartments of this thy wonderful house?" asked Simon. "Methinks thou dost narrow up and needlessly contract thine existence, to keep within a single room."

"Here—live—I," declared the death's head. "For me it is enough. This big house was dwelt in once by a poet, who filled the rooms with joyous people, and with strange lights, and music not to be understood. But I ousted him, I ousted him. Now I live in the mansion with right economy and good sense.—But seat thee on you stone chair. Easily! Stone as it is, it might be broken.—I see by thy countenance thou smellest my breath. Vinegar killeth an appetite.—Superbus and Superbia—were they not wasteful? Were they not also high commanding to thee? I knew those people long, and when they were nothing but slaves. Their master was a proud Roman who did eternally humiliate them, especially Superbus, in every designable way; as, to wit, to hold him up to scorn as a fool at banquets, and to have him publicly whipped for minor things. And whenever the master spake unto him, always he said, 'Slave, do this,' 'Dog, do that,' or it might be 'filthy fungus,' 'offal,' or the like, until one day a man from Mantua—well, it was no other lizard than myself, having money more than brains, did (chancing to learn of the chap and his misery) proceed to purchase him and make him a full present of his freedom. But I—I—"

He suddenly seized his head in both hands, then shouted: "A fool, I was a fool! I gave two hundred sesterces. Fool! Fool!"

He dropped straight down, and beat his old hard head against the stone floor, groaning and crying: "Fool—two hundred—for nothing —fool, fool!" for a very long time before he would listen to Simon's comfortings. Then, "Pardon! Thou knowest not an old man's woes, Simon. He, this scoundrel Superbus, hath never repaid me but about two thousand sesterces. That is interest. So still he oweth me the first two hundred, and my money—which, truly I tell thee, I did lend more for his liberty than my profit—it is gone, irrecoverably gone. 'Tis lost! lost! lost! lost!"

"Thy pardon," interrupted Simon. "Thou tearest thy gown."

The wretch, looking up, attempted to master his passion, and said, with pitiable melancholy: " 'Tis true. I must save my smock." And he clapped his hands, and a woman who was dirty, as well as hard and muscular, came in. Her name, according to him that called, was Utilitas.

She gave Avaritius new thorns and words even sharper, saying: "Shall we have this wastrel to sup?"

And when she had gone, the bony host said: "She is but my housekeeper, Utilitas. And indeed no man could be truly married unto her. Not very good, but cheap, cheap. I had once a lovely wife, Imaginatio, and eke a tiny daughter. Them twain how dearly I loved! But the affection was expensive, sore expensive, and—and— I came to hating them both. I hated them so that, finally, they— they—died.

"Since then I am become hospitable, and have beside me Utilitas. Not so beautiful she as is, for ensample, Luxuria, of Burdigala—"

But, at this, Utilitas re-entered, announcing a certain Pictor.

Pictor approached, and fell on his knees, crying: "I have hypothecated to thee, O Avaritius, all the things I had. Mercy, mercy, mercy!"

But Avaritius spurned him, and sent him away, weeping.

Then came in another whose name was Musicus, and with him Sculptor, and both these men had also hypothecated, as it seemed, many things to Avaritius. They, also, fell upon the floor and supplicated him. Yea, even as if their tongues were wrapping round the soles of the man's dirty sandals, so supplicated they.

And, at this, Pictor returned, bringing with him a painting which he had by his own hand of a mother and her child, both dead.

Avaritius started up, crying: " 'Tis she! 'Tis they. The furies tear my heart. How knewest thou these matters?"

Pictor said, "I know all men's hearts. And I will give thee, O Avaritius, this, the picture out of thy soul, for the debt I do owe thee."

The tears streamed down the old man's face. But at length, ceasing to weep, he murmured sweetly: "It is only worth a penny."

"Thy flesh, thy blood!" cried Pictor, hammering the board's back.

"A penny," said Avaritius.

Interrupted Simon both of them. "How much doth this man owe?"

Avaritius: "A thousand sesterces—a thousand two hundred—a thousand two hundred and ninety—and six brazen pennies."

Then cried Simon, taking up his massive bulga, in which the beams and bars of gold not lightly clinked but clanked heavily: "See! Here is more than thou dost ask, here in this little bar. Now let go this wonderfully gifted man, and be thyself at peace, O Avaritius."

But Avaritius, when he saw the heavy beams, fell straight down at the feet of the Jew, like a suppliant before a king: "Who am I, oh, who am I that I should stand before thee? I knew thee that thou wast some secret lord. Concede! Did I not even say it truly unto thee, that thou wast surely a lord? and at my very door? I knew thee despite the sadness of thine eyes." He clasped the Jew's ankles, and licked the toes of his sandals, and was at some peace while he licked.

But the Jew said, laughing: "Arise, Avaritius. Let us finish the bargain. Give me a true quittance for this most noble man and artist."

But Avaritius, as he rose, said in a voice which rapidly grew cunning again: "Nay, not so fast, most noble Master. To this debt there are numerous incidents; as, for ensample," and so on and on, and never could make an end of all the incidents to the debt. So at length, said Pictor: "I do indeed thank thee, worthy Patron, but strive not to free me in the least. Not all the gold in Cæsar's mines could do so much."

At this, Avaritius smiled a toothless smile, and lent the man a penny on the picture.

And he took possession of the wonderful production, saying aside to Simon: "It is worth ten thousand sesterces." And he placed it carefully in an archive in his wall, where none could see.

And as Pictor and Sculptor and Musicus all departed, there came yet other noble people, of great ability and fine intents, and all did owe

this villain money. And when the Jew beheld the great power which the shameful creature had above so many persons, and they excellent, solely by virtue of the gold he had clutched out of yet others, yea even from the very blood which nourished his own thin body (for the villain was half starved) then once again there awakened within the man that voice which he had heard before, but louder now and not to be in any wise ignored: "Get thee gold, O fool; get thee gold! Get thee gold, I tell thee, get thee gold!"

And Simon answered aloud, "Yes, I will get me gold."

"Sh! What didst thou say?" demanded in a fright Avaritius, starting from his chair. "It groweth dark, and I am sore afeard of thee, for thou dost look at me with evil eyes. What was that thou saidest? I fear thou art a covetous man; and covetousness is like unto the grave, for it hath never enough. List! Heard ye not somebody digging underneath the house?" And again: "Listen! Was there not some one clambering over the roof?—But hearken unto me, O covetous man that hath deceived. I have naught that thou wouldst steal, and whether thou hast confederates or not. Besides—besides—thou owest me money. Man, thou owest me money."

"I—money—thee—owe?"

"Thou. Thou owest me a thousand sesterces, yes twenty thousand. See, thou wast here aforetime, many years ago. That can I prove upon thee easily. I lent thee—but come thou before the magistrate. He oweth me money also, and he is my friend. Come!"

He clutched at Simon's hair, and flung it upward. "Thief! Escaped! Thy money and mine, or I sue thee and betray!"

He set upon Simon of Cyrene like a curse, gripping him by the gullet till darkness came before the Cyrenian. And Simon marvelled at the strength of the old bony fingers, and could not, for all his strength, have loosened them, had not Utilitas, the cunning housekeeper, run in and helped to undo the clutch, crying: "Stay not. Nay, do not stay. Get thee forth immediately, for long I cannot hold him. 'Twere worse for himself if thou didst stay, for he would kill thee. Moreover, I have taken a liking unto thee. Be gone."

And Simon, as he ran out into the night, cried: "Lo, I will be the stronger man some day, and will have gold heaped up beyond the madness of thy dreams, O Avaritius. And I will have me a mansion that is greater than thine. But this one thing I know, that I will truly live in it."

But all the watch came up, because of the turmoil, and Simon of the covetous heart ran on.

And he went down into a desert place, and dwelt there many days. And all that was in his soul may no other man know.

But after a time he fared forth into the low, fat lands of Aquitania. And he prayed for the welfare of that country into which he was now about to make his pilgrimage. As he went along, he gave great alms, and was high compassionate unto many, even unto them that had, by their own countrymen, been neglected. For such was the use and custom of his people everywhere, in whatsoever land or nation they might be.

Late in the afternoon, when the winds were sweet and cajoling and made men's memories drunk, he came to the city of Burdigala.

Here he said, "I have had so much of evil fortunes at men's domiciles, I will seek me out a public caupona. First of all, to make surer of a civil reception, even at an inn, I will buy me new and exceeding fine apparel. Have I not gold enow?"

He bought apparel. And having arrayed himself royally at the seller's shop, went forth with confidence to an inn.

Here he was noticed of a tall young man, handsome and also richly apparelled. Who came up hard by the Jew, and was eloquent to him in soft and supple kindnesses.

And he begged him, if he would, and were wholly free to leave this tavern, to come and spend a mirthful evening in his house. "My name," said he, "is Luxurius (not unfittingly) and I have a soft-voiced sister, Luxuria, who is always glad in her heart over sprightly company, especially men. Nay, hold not back, she and I dwell in our own domicile, and are there all alone (save servants) and do whatsoever thing doth pleasure us. Come, come."

When they had got to the house, and had found Luxuria, then stood Simon like a boy in her presence and trembled.

She cast her eyelids down, that she might cover her moods. And Simon was silent till they three had reached table.

When they had all well supped, she asked: "Where wast thou lately?" There was odor of wild rose about her, and her speech was sweeter than the wildest bloom that ever hath blown.

He: "At the house of Avaritius."

"That fearful man!" cried she. "And thou hast come living from his clutches? Let me tell thee of that personage. Once was he named Creator. And many were the people that thronged the myriad apartments of his house, his and his wife's, Imaginatio. And bright lights were there, and wonderful melodies. And sweet dreams were common in that house. Then he fell into debt, and had much trouble to keep his dwelling. So he became mortally afeard. And he sent

away his guests and servants. And his wife, and the only child he had had by her womb, Beatitudo, they perished. He got him a hard, hard-featured servant, Utilitas. By her help, he gathered and clutched and saved, and gathered and saved and clutched, till at length he had saved him his house. But lo, the hands of Avaritius still, out of habit, gather and clutch and save, and gather and save and clutch, and they know of no finer delights of any kind. Come, I can show thee from our own front doorstep the bare plain where his wife and child lie buried."

But when they had reached the sill, Luxurius commended them to the gods (especially Amor) and vanished up street, so that he of the restless foot and the maiden, left together, did seat them, one each side the door—as was the custom of the city only with those that were married. And there sate, both up and down the street, many neighbors at their doorways, talking both of food and of shelter and of the great unfathomable mystery which lies at the heart of being.

And the maiden spake ever to Simon in softer and softer undertones, intermingled with laughter which was like the slipping of hands. So wide-eyed, half-forgotten dreams came looking back into the Jew—dreams that alarm the heart and distend the nostrils.

"Am I beautiful?" asked Luxuria. "If truly, then why sayest thou not so? Or art thou like that wretched pair, Invidus and Invida, who dwell in the distant town, Natura Humana, and envy each and every being of their kind?"

Simon saith, "Envy? I worship!" Came out an afterglow of the sun, crimson, like the garment the woman wore, and alighted on the house and vanished. All was blackness.

The two arose without further words, and went into the house.

And when he had broken wedlock with her, she got up and cried: "Behold! I loathe thee. Depart, for I hate thee and so I shall forevermore." She drew a great knife upon him.

He would have staid longer with her at all events, but she drave him forth, and he ran by the nearest way down into a desert place.

And all that was in his heart may no other man know.

But, after a time, he went forth out of the wilderness, and into a fair champaign. And he prayed for the welfare of that land into the which he was now about to make his pilgrimage. As he passed along the way, he gave great alms and was high compassionate to many, even unto them that had, by their own countrymen, been neglected. For such was the use and custom of his people everywhere, in whatsoever land or nation they might be.

So he came, on a certain evening, unto a little gathering of men's

homes, at the base of a bright and windy cliff, on the farther side whereof a great abyss was. He asked of a villager what was the name of this place, and the man answered and said: "Natura Humana."

Now the Jew thought, "I will even buy me a little something at the place where I would stay the night, thus to render them which sell unto me the more hospitable."

He said to some one, "Show me, I prithee, a shop where figs and dates and good fresh oil can be had at a low price, and where the people are hospitable to strangers."

The villager pointed out a shop (which was over in the farthest border of the village at a little distance from all the other houses) saying: "Invidus and Invida do business there. Their merchandises are good indeed, and they dwell in the buildings just behind the shop. They are high hospitable, for, not long ago, the gods took their son, which was their one strength."

It was night, and pitch black all along the ground, when the Jew got down to the place, and the buildings stood forth strongly against the purple sky. There was no torch over the shop portal, and the Jew tried at divers entrances, stumbling ever and again before he at length found the right place—a temporary door.

And when he had entered the shop, behold! the man and the woman which kept the shop and which were coming into the room from behind with a great skin of new oil, when they saw Simon of Cyrene, dropped their skin, so that the oil was spilled.

And they twain ran to the Jew, and caught him by his hands and kissed him, crying to each other: "So like! So like!"

Then said they to the Weary One, "Behold, thou art very resemblant to our only son, whom lately the gods called, so that now we be alone. Stay, therefore, and be numbered of us. Be as our own."

They wept much, and fondled him exceedingly.

Gazed the Jew full upon the couple without perturbation, seeing how sharp their noses, thin their lips, little and squinting their ever-shifting eyes, how all their features were a pallid blue, even in the soft ardor of the evening. Yet, too, their backs were bowed, and their hands, which smelt of thyme and lavender, shook continually. And they were in the very course of remodeling their building.

So the Weary One said unto them, "I am only an immaterial merchant, Simon of Cyrene. But if truly ye will have me for your son, and do not jest, but believe I can help you, then here will I remain and be as ye say." Yet he accepted with inner laughter, remembering the deep wounds he had received at so many doors.

But him they had for their son. And he labored enduringly for them, prospering them in their commerce.

And about the couple was ever a trace of better days, as about fallen angels. There was always something purple darkling in their cheeks—shadows that passed even in the middle of laughter, like clouds o'er prosperous grain.

And they had a live raven outside, for a sign of their business. It croaked night and day.

On a time, the wife (she that would be a mother unto Simon) said to the Jew: "Where wast thou last—that is before thou camest to us? At the home of Luxuria? Blush not, O my son. All ye men are so, and many that have reached their prime as well.—Knowest thou her life-story, eke the story of her brother? They twain were children of a Stoic philosopher, much esteemed and very pure. And ever the man grew stricter over them. The innocentest pleasures were wholly forbidden. Never any visitors were seen in his home, nor could the children leave their father's garden—where they sate and moped or stood and moped, rather than played. The issue? Thou hast seen no doubt such things. Those children are as bad in certain respects as old, fat Gula, the glutton, for his food. She outvieth her brother, he her. Each, indeed, is the other's pimp, and, though the twain have oft repented, oft speak (it seemeth strange) of reformation, yet they reform not, but wax more profligate. We hold this not as against thee, O our dear son, neither I nor thy father, so be thou always wilt stay with us."

The raven croaked, and Simon said that he would stay.

Again, when the Jew was cleansing oil for his parents, Invida was abusing certain neighbors who, she said, were far too prosperous to suit the gods. "Think ye," she asked, "that the gods will stomach it if people be too happy? Will they not indeed, those gods, remove those peoples' son from them or perchance cause them to fail in their business?"

Said her husband, Invidus: "The gods will surely take the son away from them—those people—and also make them fail in business. I, for one, will laugh and wholly rejoice when thus the gods have entreated them."

At this, there entered the door a blunt officer of the prefect, and said to both Invidus and Invida: "The money! Thy creditors will have the money."

Thereupon Invidus and Invida brake into loud lamentations, and fell down on the floor. They clutched the officer's knees, supplicating him that he would, at the least, be not wholly unmerciful.

But the officer shaketh them off rudely, saying: "This night will I come again, and bring another owner of this business and of all these buildings, and ye shall forthwith out of doors. Be ye warned therefore and ready."

And when the officer was gone, Simon cried aloud: "O parents that have loved me so well, do ye think ye have treated me right, inasmuch as ye have kept your true conditions to yourselves? Did ye believe that I, a son, could not help you? Be calm. I will soon return."

He came back shortly, high of heart and quivering because of the pleasure he felt.

He lifted up his enormous bulga, then, and inverted it and banged the great bars and beams of gold on the floor.

The foster parents stood up, at first marvelling.

Then their eyes sought not the Jew's, but each other's, and their faces grew more livid than before.

Which seeing, Simon saith: "All this gold, at least so much as ye need in your predicament, it is yours, and without thought of any return unto me. Have ye not said, 'Son'? Reach down, therefore, and pick this metal up. Feel for yourselves that the beams are those of heaviness and all worth."

But yet neither Invidus nor Invida would touch the bars or the beams, and the heart of the Jew began to throb with fearful boding. Said he once more, "O Invida and Invidus, parents of mine, I do truly love you both, for that ye have loved me also, and have sheltered me, a wanderer, and have done me many kindnesses. And now I lend not this fortune unto you, but give it freely, seeking not any recompense whatsoever, but only the joy I have in this, to do you, dear parents, such pleasure and delight."

Then turned unto him Invidus and Invida their purple countenances, and the man beheld that his parents were naught but envious because of his wealth, incapable therefore of rejoicing in any degree.

And his knees grew weak as water. He wished he were dead.

Invida at length said unto him, "Dog! And with gold! What hast thou, dog, done in this world that thou shouldst have gold?"

He said unto them, "Father! Mother!"

But the man shrieked, suffering implacably: "Hell! Furies! Jew! Thief! Judæus Triliteratus."

Invida hissed like a goose, "S-s-s-t! What dost thou, ass, with this? Seemest thou hast not solely labored for such brightness. S-s-s-t! Beest Cæsar's slave, ass, thou serpent? Thinkest it hath escaped us twain thou art a man of three letters? Thou hast come

to us and pretended unto us to be like our own son. But what indeed art thou? Hast not suffered in the Mines? Shame! Answer us that. Hast thou not indeed been with chisel and pick? And art thou not a scoffer at the gods? Hast thou not said there was no other god but thine? Let us see again thy hated hands. Are they not marked forever with mallet and with chisel? Wilt thou not show them? Sad-eye! Thief!" Running to the door, she cried to the village: "Thief! Help, help! Thief! Run hither, watch!"

But Simon himself, having gathered up his golden beams and bars, was running on his own account, and in very good season—but envious, envious of all that had ever a fixed abode in the town of Natura Humana, and with never a brand upon their fortunate brows. "Alas, that I am a poor-rich child of Abraham!" cried he.

And he went down into a desert place. And all that was in his heart may no other man know.

But, after a time, he went forth out of the wilderness, and up into a wide, black, abdominous country, where even the houses were great and the barns and granaries were distended beyond belief. And he prayed for the welfare of that land into the which he was about to make his pilgrimage. And as he passed along the way he gave great alms (for the poor were here also) and was high compassionate unto many, even unto them that had, by their own rich countrymen, been neglected. For such was the use and custom of his people everywhere, in whatsoever land or nation they might be.

And the man himself was hungry both for food and for friendship, yea though he had much gold. But all did pass him by, either with shrugs or lifted eyebrows or pretences not to have seen him, until of a hot, high noon, as he shambled weakly along the Roman road (seeing strange visions rising up and fading out before him) behold, a large, emaciated man who was, as it seemed, a very important steward of a nearby farm.

And the steward, when he saw the Jew, came rushing up, and laid hands upon him, crying in a little, goat-like voice: "Ho! Thou seemest a man that could chew and yet not swallow!"

Saith Simon, "I neither swallow nor chew."

Then said the man, "What art thou?"

And Simon, who was so lean and hungry that he shamed to answer him, "A merchant," saith unto him, "A philosopher."

"Thou art then, of a surety, poor."

"Aye! I starve to escape the perplexities and restraints of this world."

But cool suspicion passed over the great one's face. "Belike art

thou an escaped slave—a *publicus*. There be a many hereabouts. Such men, whenever they chew, they swallow."

Now, poor Simon, who was growing more and more delirious, what with the want of food, the long, laborious hours of walking, the refusals at many doors, and the unappeased anxiety about re-capture, talked off (and could not help it) a string of strangely foolish matters, as, to wit, the prisons of this world, and great thickets and waste places, and crosses and the carrying of them, and the prices of food, and doors that would never open, and the names of excellent things to eat, and whence from other languages their names were taken, and why it might have been different and why not. He laughed withal wildly twice and again.

And the silly, disjointed talk did so impress the important overseer that he saith straightway, with high reverence: "I see thou art indeed a philosopher, even as thou saidest, eke a very learned one also. But behold! for all this, thou mayest indeed have escaped the mines, or at least the road-works. But see! we let that pass in any case. If it suit thee to accept a trifling work for trifling compensation, I—being short-handed— Hast thou ever chewed for pigeons? Wilt thou indeed chew for them, philosopher?"

Simon saith, "Aye, either for them or for myself. And better for the latter than the former. But why hast thou here" (as the man did lead him to the pigeon-yard, within an enclosure) "so many hundreds of these birds and eke of great fat capons?"

The man shrilled, "Interrogate not me, but chew and stuff even as here thou seest all these score of workmen both chewing the white, fine bread and stuffing the pigeons therewith. And chew thou so, and so stuff. A denarius a day to thee—but eat not the pigeons' food. It will go full sore with thee else."

But Simon had already torn a great loaf away from the men, and was both chewing for, and also stuffing, his own poor stomach.

"What! Hold! Thief! Knowest thou not that only one, in addition to the pigeons, hath any right to swallow?"

But Simon of the Suffering Stomach only ran about in quick circles, and continued to munch his loaf.

Till at length he was fetched a hearty crack over the pate.

Then, with a shrill cry, the Jew threw up his hands, lost his loaf, and seeing that the staff was about to descend again, set off round a mighty granary at high speed with the thin steward and an even more starven multitude close behind him.

Now Simon had already learned that it is better to be well hidden

than to run fast. So, though he was getting stronger by a little, because of the bread, he ran into the granary.

The opposite door was open, and he might have run clean through without hindrance. But first he glanced about. Great, high cones and pyramids of grain! Empty bins also. That was all. No, not all—the skin.

He darted behind the cured aurochs hide, which hung from a lofty, projecting beam, and which was full three feet from touching the floor. Leaping to the beam, he caught it in his hands, and drew up his feet behind the hide precisely as the overseer, with his crowd of followers, roared into the building.

Like a harrying blast they swept on through.

But scarcely had the echoes of their steps died from the far recesses of the great barn, when Simon heard the hunters coming back.

In they rushed, half the party crying: "Yea, he is in some bin."

Now, though Simon had grown a little stronger on the bread, yet still he was so weak that he felt he could not hang up there, suspended by quivering hands, much longer.

Still, of a surety, he so did hang for a considerable time.

Good sooth, he hung till the bins and heaps of grain had each and all been thumped and prodded with staves, stones and dung-forks. Then had he the joy to hear the little voice of the big overseer: "He may be behind that aurochs skin."

Now, at the suggestion, Simon well-nigh dropped.

But hark! a boisterous laugh greeteth the words of the pipe-like. And a man who seemeth, in rank, above the overseer (for that he is better fed) and whose voice is rich, round and thunderous, sneereth vibrantly: "How, O fool, could any man hide behind a skin, whose bottom hangeth full three feet from the floor?"

So Wisdom, only because it had a feeble throat, was crushed, and Stupidity, because its words were rich and deep, and also for this, that it had a higher rank, was ruler in the conclave.

Simon, even when the crowd was gone and could be heard no longer, for its great distance down the Roman road, kept on hanging, the while he uttered a prayer of thanksgiving to Jehovah, the God of his fathers, for safety and for hope. Then he fell to the floor, and knew naught.

When he had woken, there was someone chafing his palms, and trying to get him to drink both milk and wine. And Simon listened, as well as he could for the drumming in his ears, and knew that

the tiny voice was that of the emaciated man who had said, "Perchance he is behind the skin of the aurochs."

But the man was very merciful to Simon, and Simon heard his voice with exceeding pleasure, and drank a little of the wine and would have swallowed more of the milk, but all at once the thin-voiced overseer, placing hand to ear for a single moment, cried out: "Fly! Fly! The men return, and they will kill thee."

And Simon of the Never-resting Soles ran down through a heavy-fruited orchard, swam (as it were) over a fragrant sea of meadow, rushed round into a garden which looked like the dreams of old-time Tantalus, and, peering all about if perchance he might see some happy avenue of exit, beheld, near a mansion, in a great high chair, strapped in to keep his rolls of fat from tumbling forth, a man—or was it tallowy mountain—engaged in sleep. A foolish smile rolled round his puffing mouth and flabby, floppy, three-fold, well beslobbered chin. There was smell of roasted capon all about him, and the titillating pungency of snails.

And Simon hid, and the fat man woke, and cried a bit, and then snorted: "Spirituality! spirituality! spirituality! Oh the crude, crass things of life! Could anyone care for these, or for aught but spirituality?"

Again he slept.

And Simon watched, being well hidden, and none of his pursuers to be heard. After a time, the big one once more awoke, and said: "I dreamed a hungry man was nigh." His voice was thick with snuffling leisure, like the soothe gurgling of a cask of Lydian oil.

At that the Jew was sore afeard, for he considered: "The man hath seen me, and he knoweth I am caught, therefore playeth with me for a while."

But presently the fat man brake into weeping, and said: "If only I could see a truly starving man once more, that might bring back mine appetite. O transcendent gastronomy!"

At this, the Jew, confident, stepped forth, and, bowing his lowest and brightest: "Master, I starve."

Thereupon the fat man fairly brake the strap that held him in his chair, and fell straightway to the ground. And when he had gathered his flesh together about him, though in waves, he saith unto Simon: "Delude not me."

Saith Simon unto him, "I do not delude thee. Behold, I starve! For I surely am a philosopher, O Master, and would teach wisdom to the world, but starve instead. My name is Simon of Cyrene, and I starve."

The fat man shouted, and clasped the Jew about the feet, and laughed and sobbed and slobbered all of a time, declaring: "I thought I had merely dreamed, but the gods are always very good to me. For truly thou dost starve. And see, I will take thee into my mansion, and thou shalt sit before me while I do eat many things. And I shall again have a good appetite. Come."

The Jew assisted his fleshiness into the house.

And all those aforetime hunters of the Jew, having now found his traces, came up, but Gula (for such the Master said his name was) drave them off with a sharp word, crying: "Am not I ruler here? This man is my friend. Will ye so entreat him? Look ye after the capons. So."

And the hunters slunk away, and Gula and Simon entered into the house, and took their places at a beautiful table.

Then came the housekeeper, Stupiditas, and musicians with various instruments.

Simon lay at the opposite end of the table from Gula, where the gourmand could watch him closely while he, even Gula, ate, that the starving man might serve as the rich man's stimulant and appetizer. Gula clapped his soft fat hands and gave orders, and Stupiditas waited upon him and brought and set before him (but not before the Jew) both a crystal dish of nut-goodies and an amethyst goblet brimmed with Chian wine. Gula asked, "Wouldst thou not say, O starving man, that a person should not drink at all when his mouth is full of food?"

"I would say it."

"Yet wouldst thou be mistaken. Take but a goodie of a nut in thy mouth, and then a little of the Chian wine. So. Now do not be so foolish as to chew—"

"I chew not, O Gula, having nothing in my mouth whereon to chew."

"But close thine eyes gently, lay thy head softly back upon thy silken cushion, concentrate thy closest attention on the heart-dear contrast which exists (thanks be to all the gods therefor) between the goodie and the wine.

"Now, when thou hast that contrast fully in the fist of thy attention, then crush the goodie—not with the teeth, not with the little-feeling teeth—but by squeezing the goodie softly against thy palate with the exquisite tip of thy tongue—if starving Jew hath truly such an organ.

"Thou hast done well, but practice will make thee perfect."

The Jew swallowed his spittle, and cried fiercely: "I starve!"

And Gula shrieked with delight.

Then saith Gula unto him softly, "I love thee. Where wast thou last?"

Simon looked over the panels of the room for a little time, observing that all of these were excellent paintings of people that were perished for lack of food. Then said he, "I stayed last at the house of Luxurius and his sister (for the man could not yet bear to remember either Invidus or Invida, for so he did envy the people of Natura Humana their fixed abode, and likewise suffered bitterly from the envy which Invidus and Invida had felt against him).

"Foundest thou not them queer people?"

"They were queer—I starve."

"Ah! that Luxurius and his foolish sister, I know them both. I know them, aye I know them." And, as he nodded to impress deeply that he knew, he suddenly fell asleep. Awaking with a flabby start, he cried: "Of what spake I?—Thou liest! I was not asleep."

"Thou spakest," said Simon, "concerning that fellow, Lust. Thou saidest thou didst know him."

A tallowy smile crept into view from far away among the features of the fat host. "I know," said he. "Yes, I know him. He was soon to have married a good, pure girl—chaste as Diana. His sister, too (more goodies yet, Stupiditas!) she would have been married to a very—very— But the father of these children was a Stoic philosopher, and he did close them up in a prison where each could never see a being of the other sex, and he did beat them and maltreat them even as Zeus maltreated the old fire-bringer, Prometheus—which—if he had not brought the fire, we should not today have had any good fat capons roasted, or stuffed pigeons, with the gravy and the snails, and all the other lofty things that make—"

"What sayest thou about Luxurius?" brake in Simon, who still, with as hot a heart as ever, loved the sister of that personage. "Of the pigeons and the capons, if it please you, at some other time."

Gluttony, with closed eyes, sat still for a little while, the slaver pouring from his mouth. At last, with a great effort, he sucked up his lip, swallowed twice or thrice in snortling ecstasy, and continued: "Ah! my friend, my friend. It is *still* the law, as thou knowest. And it *was* the law even before this land was subjugated by great Cæsar (a dozen capons, wench, with snails) and eke by the ways of yet more conquering Greece, that a parent hath the power both of life and of death over any of his children. So, as I say, the father of these children did keep them locked in cells, with scarce a morsel

to eat or drink. Think of that: with scarcely a thing either to eat or to drink. It must have been terrible, terrible—"

"And what then happened?" questioned the Jew.

"The father died."

"Then the children were, at length, in liberty?"

"Thou sayest well. They were more than in liberty. They were in furious, unbounded license and illimitable self-gratification. They turned to unlawful delights—whereof, no doubt, thou wottest well. Neither of them twain hath ever married, preferring, in the room of that, to live alone together, and so to assist each other in the procurement of that which—is—very—unlawful. And how do they eat, that bad man and his sister? Like lunatics. Not, O Jew, as I myself do eat, with full appreciation of the godlike food (ah! the capons! good!) listening the while (a dozen more, Stupiditas!) as it were, to the ecstatic music which viands, well harmonized— But, in the name of Apollo and all his strings, ye strange musicians, why are ye not playing to the meal?"

"We were only waiting," declared the leader of the musical band, "for thy signal, O Master."

"The signal," cried the gourmand, "is always this, that I eat. See, it is capons I now begin on. Play therefore something heavy and in the Dorian mode, precisely as Stupiditas did days ago instruct thee."

The musicians began, and, while they played, Gula went on to explain to the Jew that, with certain kinds of dishes 'twere fitting that the Dorian mode be followed by the instruments—as, to wit, with capons, pigeons stuffed with tongues of nightingales, peacocks and snails and the seven important mushrooms, and so forth and so on. Heavy and sombre dishes all of them, with a certain solemnity attached, and eke sublimity. Then, meadow birds, and eggs both of larks and of tortoises, and also bread boiled with bones, and things of such lighter and more frippy character, were better accompanied by the Phrygian scale. Fish demandeth something lighter still, say the Lydian or the Myxolydian. Then fruit and pastries (thank the gods for these) take up the lightest and most delicate of manners—for ensample the lively Hypolydian or Aeolic. Jew, sit up. I cannot spare thee so."

The sweet musicians played in the Doric mode divinely, and the Jew suffered, and Stupiditas did wait with all her silly speed, while the great, broad, pasty jowls of Gula snatched and puffed and smacked, opened and closed and smacked, snortling again and continually. "Capons—more." The wee eyes sparkled. "Capons again,

Stupiditas!" The pyramid of strong, energetic chins—the last one lost beneath the loose top edge of his blue garment—did roll themselves inward and again out-roll themselves to the dignified march of the music. "Chup-chup! Chup-chup! Puff-smack, chop-chup! Jew, it is surely delightful!

"Stay here and starve for me, O Jew. So should I come, in time, to be as slothful as is that easy man, Accidius; to lose that overactive way of life which now—though all about me were as cross as is his foul-tongued consort, Ira. Stay, O stay! Wilt thou not—?"

But Simon brake in upon him: "What wages for me, if I do stay?"

"Wages!" shrieked the fat one. "Wages! Jew, thou'rt mad. With wages thou wouldst eat. Then what service couldst thou render?"

But the Jew rose, and crying: "I tell thee of a verity I will eat," seized a dozen capons and a skin of wine, and, making a hurried gesture of farewell, ran out by the garden passage and so off.

And he went down into a desert place, and was himself, at heart, a gourmand. But all that was in his thoughts may no other man know.

And after certain days had been fulfilled, he entered again the roads of Aquitania, and marching now by day and yet again by night, he saw the *suculæ* (or "little pigs") were setting at both the morning and the evening twilight, so that wet and stormy weather was, of a surety, at hand. And he looked for shelter, but found none.

So he came, on a time, to a very gentle by-way which led out through a sea of meadow, and, in the deepest portion of the field, a brook, whose sounds were like the many voices of forgotten dreams. And he asked that God should bless that land. Yet he forgot to give alms.

And here he lay, as in a trance, both slumbering and sleeping, and harboring thoughts that owe no allegiance unto time. But now and again he was woken by the crumblings of detestable thunder, and little spittings of rain into his face.

So at length he arose and betook himself once more to his journey, saying: "Such ill fortunes I have had at the houses which promised me much, I will now seek out the most repugnant hovel which I can find." And he passed a number of mansions. Then he saw on a low horizon, straight away before him, or it might have been a little in the sky, an uncertain shape, perchance a changeful cloud, but it resembled a pillowy bed, with an irate giant, club in hand, standing over it. As he drew on, he saw that the seeming bed was the

wretchedest house which he ever had seen, while the giant was a great tree with a blasted branch running out over the building.

There came from afar the sound of Roman trumpets, blowing terror. Also, a wee wind began for to whine. Suddenly—a quick pattering, and the Jew believed that heavy rain had begun to fall. But, in the twinkling of an eye, behold! an enormous Ethiopian, standing before him.

For then a little while the slave gazed at the Jew with great astonishment. By degrees, the look passed, and, in its room, came a stare of wonder, almost worship.

The black fell down, clasping Simon's shoes. "Me saw you in Mines. Me wanderer also."

"I have been in the Mines," saith Simon.

"You Simon of Cyrene. Me Cush. Come legionaries—yonder. You save Cush."

Now Simon bade the man arise, and, when he had arisen, the Jew saw that also his forehead had been branded, but with this word—"Despicatus" (The Despised). Then remembered Simon that he had seen the black aforetime in the Mines.

And he began to have compassion over this man, but would not that this should be. Therefore said he, roughly: "Seest thou not I cannot help thee in any wise, being also a fugitive? Get thee gone."

The blackamoor fell down again at the Jew's feet, beseeching that he would take the suppliant into his service. "Though Cush out of Mines," saith he, "Cush know not where go, or what do. Take Cush. He serve well. Be only kind."

Waxed Simon wroth. He gat him up and spurned the Ethiopian, and drave him from his sight, crying wildly: "Have I not given thee answer? Be gone."

But when the black had vanished, Simon began to consider whether he had done rightly. Said he, "I could have had him as my servant, and might have begun some mercantile affair on a small scale with a strong man for my helper."

He tried to form more plainly the plans which, even within the Mines, had started to take shape—plans, that is, for the amassing of wealth—whereby power and safety might be possible even for him, Simon of Cyrene.

But the weather was hot, and all the air and the woods and the fields and the sky, were, as a person might say, full of idleness and dreaming—though, far away, a flock of migratory birds were winging their laborious passage toward the southeast, with anxious flappings of wings and extravagant clamor. And he envied the laboring birds,

because they went toward Rome, and were not afeard. And he thought of the days in far-off Cyrenaica, when he used to look and yearn toward Rome. But so great was the languor all around, that, but for the growing darkness and the heapings up of thunder-heads and a far-off flashing and muttering, he would not have set forward at all that day, but only have lingered in the meadows and on the sweet hills like a truant which hath given the slip to both master and pedagogue.

Now he began to look again at the rickety house, which was all unsmeared of its ochre, but a little yellow and red. As he came up closer, he heard a shrill voice crying within: "Did I not say unto thee that so it would happen? And have not my words proved true? Answer me. Answer me, Accidius."

The slow, deep voice of a man protested: "Why wakest thou me with clacking? I have had but one good wink of sleep this whole week. Now thou breakest into that."

"Thou liest, sluggard," the voice went on. "Thou liest. Twice daily hast thou been to the tavern, and only then didst thou waken. Why workest thou not sixteen hours per day, even as thy parents did bring thee up to do? Thou mightest thus have been a man of wealth, whereby thy wife could now be living in ease and luxury. And *then* hadst thou seen fit to lie down and sleep even forevermore—well enough. I could have remarried."

"Would to God I had so lain down or ere I had seen thee. Or would thou hadst remarried to begin with. Let me sleep."

"Wilt thou be ever sleeping?"

"Wilt thou be ever clacking?"

"Up, sluggard!"

"Silence, hussy!"

"Up!"

"Silence!"

"Up, up, up!"

"Silence, silence, silence! Oh, by the gods of Hell! that I might have had a home that Morpheus would not disdain to visit!"

"By the gods of hospitality! that I might have had a house wherein some humblest visitor would not be ashamed—"

"Tap, tap, tap!" went the Jew at the door, and the voices were hushed.

After a time he knocked again. Then the scared words of the husband: "By the gods that work themselves to death, hast thou, O Ira, sent for anyone that would put me to industry?"

"Nay, O Accidius. But, by the gods that had wives the which

they had never merited, thou shalt get thee out from the straw, and see who knocketh on yonder lintel. Come, come! I have thee! So!"

And Simon heareth both shuffling and determined steps.

And the door flung open.

And behold, she that was wife thrust forward in the view of Simon her husband's head, the which she did support and manipulate in the rear by the nape of its well-maned neck.

The frowsy head, peering with narrow, red-rimmed, and gently blinking eyes, saith unto him: "Come in, who'er thou art, and lay thee beside me (who am Accidius or Sloth) upon the straw. And what if Ira rail? The whole world raileth. But he that sleepeth knoweth not: therefore sleep eternally. I have made a long speech. Come in."

But the voice of Ira screamed: "Yea, come in. Come in and help to awaken Accidius, that he shall attend to his work. It may happen thou knowest new words of revilement or damnation. So come in."

But Simon shuddered, and was suddenly filled with disgust. Said he, "Good-bye to you both, O Sloth and Ire. For I have lately been contaminate by many filthy creatures, but, by you, I will not be contaminate. Therefore, farewell." And he not so much as entered into the house of Ira and Accidius.

And he went down into a desert place, and all that was in his heart may no other man know.

And he lay him down in the desert, for he was very weary, first looking round, and seeing at a Sabbath day's journey a man that moved slowly along the distant Roman road. Drest was he in a garment of dingy yellow, as he were a careless merchant or a strange philosopher, and he rode a milk-white steed. His beard was very black and very glossy and very long.

And, as Simon had laid him down and yet was looking toward the man, he fell fast asleep, and began to dream the gloomiest and most distressing dreams.

He went on from one thing to another till he found himself, as he thought, at wandering in a tawny desert, where nothing beside the yellow sands were, saving long dark shadows and the short yellow stones which cast them.

And he said, "These short, clear stones and the long dim shadows which they cast, are after the manner of Lampadephorus's allegories, for behold those tales were ever brief and clear, yet each did bring beside it a long meaning in which full many things were hid." And, even in his very sleep, he laughed.

A voice thereupon said unto him, "So be it, and behold!"

And he looked, and after a time saw that the stones were centuries which were slowly crumbling into grains of night-separated days and close-jointed hours and the all-constructing moments.

And he said, "Is there nothing here but centuries that crumble into days and hours and the sixtieth portions of the hours?"

And the Voice, which was everywhere and yet nowhere, said: "Yea, look yonder and thou wilt perceive a mountain, out of which the centuries themselves are crumbled, and, in the rear of that, an infinity of mountains—for these are the Peaks of Time."

Simon said to the Voice, "Is there nothing at all, O Voice, behind the infinity of mountains?"

The Voice said, "Yea, an infinity of other mountains, each of which is like unto an infinity, as compared with that infinity that is nearer."

"And what," said then the dreamer, "is back behind the ultimate infinity of mountains?"

"Hush!" said the Voice, "for, if I told thee, thou wouldst die."

Then was the heart of the Jew dismayed, for he feared to be in a place where nothing was but only the Voice and himself, and the centuries which labored imperceptibly at the making of the years, the days, and the minutes, and the mountains behind the mountains, and, far in the rear of those mighty summits, a thing which he did not dare to comprehend, lest indeed he should perish because of the understanding.

So he cried aloud and said unto the Voice: "O Voice, I am sore afeard, and believe I am lost in a dream, and shall never come forth out of it again into reality."

The Voice said, "Hast thou ever, at any time, known Reality? But look and behold and perceive one thing that thou mayst truly know."

The Jew looked and beheld, and perceived, coming straight toward him among the long, dim shadows and the short clear stones, over the dead years and the dead hours and the dead minutes, all those one-ideaed folk at whose houses he had lately stopped: black-gowned, sharp-visaged, high-treading Superbus, boasting of genealogies. Next to him, the bony Avaritius, sputtering and grasping with supernumerary fingers after the necessities of other men. Then the slight maiden, Luxuria, with her innocent, lust-lighted eyes. Invidus and Invida next, purple and luckless with hate of others' weal. Then Gula, crying: "Will no one starve for me?" Finally, Accidius,

walking as half asleep, and belabored at every step by shrieking Ire—but, when these twain beheld the Jew, they halted.

And, as so often happens in a dream, there were changes and unaccountable blendings of one person with another. And the Jew looked with wonderment and increasing awe.

The features of all these strangely distorted people, saving Ira and Accidius alone, began to take on for him a familiar expression, the people themselves to draw up closer each to each. At length they merged into only one gigantic person which got itself incontinently upon a black pedestal, and looked at the Jew with a stony stare which aroused in his heart a sickening self-consciousness.

And behold, The Thing had become a graven image, with strange suggestions in its eyes both of animals and of gods.

And the face of the image appeared as if known to the Jew, and Simon beheld and saw that the features were his own. Yea, the idol was indeed becoming himself.

And in front of this *ego* (spite of his utmost power of will against the act) the man cast himself prostrate, and worshipped. Again and yet again, whether he would or no, he worshipped, in ceaseless and passionate adoration.

Then the Voice took shape, and became Ophidion, which laughed the worshipper to scorn, saying: "Thou wilt be ever an idolater, O priest of the Almighty, for thou wilt worship either dead wood or ravening beasts, or the multiplied empty forms of thine own religion, or else these—the base passions which are become thyself. And even in the future (if this image here and I did suffer thee to live) thou wouldst worship little gems and gold, and yet one other, and even baser thing, which I would tell thee of, but that, if I told thee, thou mightest find some joy therein. Pah! Thou a priest of holiness!"

The Jew cried unto the Mocker, "I pray thee, let this thing pass from me, for I declare unto thee, first, that all these distorted people have been as a school to me, and next, that all the time when I consorted with them (but never with Accidius and Ira) I was thinking solely of Amahnah, and how I might yet return unto her, but behold, I was fain, for a time, to keep going onward into the distance, that I might remain out of the Mines of the Wretched—the whereunto thou thyself didst cause that I should be imprisoned. Moreover, that very confinement did so shape me that I became an easier prey to those people."

But Ophidion answered, "It is habit now, this, thy newer, idolatry. In any case see! This image is alive. It and I will strangle thee unto destruction, and send thy worthless soul to Hades."

So the image came down from its pedestal, and, together with Ophidion, laid hands upon the Jew, and would surely have strangled him, but that a flash showed and thunder resounded and a great, bright angel came flying from across the Peaks of Time, and put the grim adversaries of the Jew into confusion and drave them far away, crying unto Simon: "This is merely a dream, for many strange things shall lie about thee in the World of Waking, to be done by thy hands; and some of thy thoughts thyself shalt surely imagine, and others shall come unto thee—who shall say from whence? But behold, the plan is wholly God's.—Wilt thou not be about His business? Wilt thou not awake? Wilt thou not awake?"

CHAPTER XXXIV

Levitas, in Gaul

And behold, Simon was truly awakening, while Cush, the Ethiopian, did pluck him by his sleeve, crying: "Master, it thundereth and there is one would speak with thee. Wilt thou not awake? See! he may be as a friend!"

And the Jew beheld that the man who would speak unto him was the merchant (or be it some philosopher) who sate in a yellow garment on a white horse, and whom he had seen a-coming straight toward him, ere he had fallen asleep.

The Jew laughed, saying: "Such a foolish dream! I crave thy pardon, Lord. I had thought I should never have come forth out of that dream, so long did I seem to remain in it, but behold, I have slept but merely one or two moments of time."

The man smiled also, saying: "Life is but a dream. Nothing at all exists. We fall asleep only from one dream to another, and merely waken to the first again." Then, after a course of speech as concerning many things, he saith to the Jew: "My name is Skepticus, my calling that of a philosopher. Art thou Simon, aforetime of Cyrene?"

The Jew answered and said unto him, "I will not deny it. Thou sayest I am."

Then saith the man, "I know that thou hast escaped from the mines of Cæsar, and yet I will not inform concerning thee, but will tell thee something useful (before, good sooth, I break unto thee mad and melancholy tidings). And the useful thing—that which I would tell thee first—is, namely, that this Ophidion, otherwise called Sarcogenes, who is a Christian and thy worst enemy, hath ceased to be a

delator (albeit he was aforetime the prince of the body of delators), and hath become, instead, a *comes principis*, companion unto Cæsar, and sitteth not infrequently at Cæsar's right hand. He hath, then, I need not tell thee, O Simon of Cyrene, great dominion over thee, and willeth, if thou be but caught, that thou shouldst be returned unto the Mines, or else crucified. For he hath an idea, this foolish Ophidion (wise and cunning as he is in many other respects) that, by inflicting punishment upon thee, he punisheth some god—or at least interfereth with that god's work.

"Now, it is clear that a man cannot interfere with the work of any god. Moreover, there is no god. But, however it be about these matters, I have told thee truly, and desire but to place thee on thy guard as toucheth Ophidion. For lo! I have learned of thy sufferings and am wounded by them. Moreover, I wished to speak about these lesser things before I gave thee the far greater tidings, which chiefly I did come hither (having learned about thee in the night) to inform thee concerning."

Simon thanked the man, and began trembling.

Then said Skepticus, "Canst thou bear a heavy word, standing up under it?"

Simon answered him, "I have already borne many things, most of them heavy as lead."

But Skepticus: "Yet this one thing I fear thou canst not bear." He looked the Jew in the eye with commiseration.

Then went the Jew straight up to the philosopher, and laid heavy hands upon him, crying: "How is it with Amahnah—for I have loved her day and night, both in the Mines and since I escaped. Tell me, and deny me nothing."

The man, turning his face away, saith unto Simon: "Amahnah is dead."

"My children—those precious babes?"

"Become Christians."

The Jew began to pray fearfully for Amahnah, yet also to curse his two sons.

And Skepticus, after a time, looking afar off, told the Jew how his wife and children had suffered shipwreck, and that now no hope was had at all of Amahnah. "They three were coming," said he, "from Jerusalem to Rome—no doubt in search of thee. I was aboard their ship, and a clansman of thine also, thy former teacher, Parush. A storm arose. And Parush took the helm even out of the hands of the gubernator. And the ship struck a rock. We twain saw thy loved ones sink beneath the waves. But the children were rescued.

Parush—he liveth now in Rome, in the quarter of the Jews, but I who am travelling ever, both up and down the world, I promised both to Parush and to myself that I would find thee out and instruct thee as concerning these things. What, Simon! Canst thou not stand up still?"

But when the philosopher saw that the Jew could no longer keep straight, but had fallen, he stayed not then to comfort him, but rode away, calling back, however: "Thou hast a servant (whose name seemeth, rightly enough, to be 'Despicatus'). He will see to thy bodily necessities. And I have other aims, for behold I am even now due at the Castle of Levitas, in the heart of Gaul."

And the blackamoor did help, having compassion on his master, saying, time and yet again: "Comfort, Lord! Be comforted. Some philosophers say, 'Be humble.'"

And after a time the Jew rose up, apostrophizing: "O Amahnah thou art dead, and our children were even better in their graves. Let them be accursed. But if ever I forget thee, Amahnah, let my right hand forget its cunning. Thou shalt be, at the least, as a beautiful memory unto me, O lovely Covenant, and shalt protect me from the ways of the heathen for so long as I shall live."

But in his soul he felt a desire for further discourse with that philosopher which had brought him the news of Amahnah's death, for he thought that the philosopher must know more things about his wife's departure. So he said to Cush, or Despicatus: "Knowest thou which way he went, the man that was just here?"

Cush said, "Yea; philosopher say he go Castle of Levitas, in heart of Gaul."

Then said Simon, "Cush, I will take thee as my servant from now henceforth. And first we will go to the Castle of Levitas, for I must speak again with Skepticus. And next we will take us to Toletanum,[1] back in Spain, and, next thereafter, when I shall have learned the language of the place, we shall take us to a wild and distant country. Wilt thou go with me? Up then! Let us be on the road."

When they had fared for many days they came to a sunny, but withal stormy, province, known as Otium, where the going was very bad; thence to Ebrietas, a pleasant land of many rich grapes, but foully beset with tipsy people; and at length unto another known as Ebriositas, a place of great drunkards and naked poverty, which depended for its upkeep on Ebrietas. And in neither of these lands

[1] The modern Toledo, famous even in antiquity for its manufacture of steel.

did Simon of Cyrene become a-drunken. Neither did he permit that his servant should become so.

And they came to the city of Volutabrum (which, being interpreted, meaneth "A wallowing-place for swine"). Going into a tavern, seeking rest and sustenance, they beheld that the place was filled with drunken roysterers. And when these had expended all their moneys, and could buy no more wine, then slipped one of them back behind the Jew and struck him with a weapon, that he fell senseless.

And Despicatus fled.

But the drunkards took the Jew's bulga and his scrip, and having laid the man's body in a field at the outskirts of the city, returned to their roystering.

And Simon awoke. And he said, "Behold, even if a man be not himself a drunkard, yet, by the mere association with such fellows, he is bound to lose. Lucky am I that I carried not my riches in a single place, but have still about me a golden girdle. And all these things shall be as a school to me hereafter."

And just beyond the borders of Ebriositas, he asked again his way.

The drunkard which answered, said unto him: "The Castle of Levitas? It stands but a valley or two distant—on the airiest pinnacle of rock that ever a castle was built on. That castle will fall, on a day. But it standeth, as now, in the heart of Gaul. 'Tis the only place that the Romans themselves could not quite demolish. Mayhap 'twill fall of itself. Meantime it is a lovely edifice enough."

"And this Levitas," asked Simon, "who is he? And will he be like to give me a welcome?"

"He is Count of all the Parisii," said the drunkard, "and he welcometh all men, so they come with song and mirth and no heavy business or sorrow—unless indeed it be hidden in their hearts. Hark! Methought I could hear for a moment certain sounds of his mad revelry. Go ye across the valley of Men's Bones, which beginneth yonder, and then ye shall surely hear his shouts, and so be guided."

Simon did as the drunkard had told him, and when he had crossed the valley which was covered with the skeletons of men, he heard indeed the wild, uproarious festivities of Levitas and his drunken crew, and, going but a valley or so farther onward, beheld the scarlet castle with its pennants flying, built solely upon a great black rock which jutted far out over an immeasurable abyss.

But Simon toiled on up to the castle. And having come to the drawbridge, he said: "I bring no heavy business or sorrow, but

wish to be admitted to the gaities." So he was let in by the porter, and on to the feasting-room.

And there was Skepticus a-revelling, but far too drunk to talk. And the Jew passed him by, and, being drawn by the music and the multitudes, and by mere human curiosity, went on farther into the room, a hall incredibly vast, in which were packed whole thousands of people, both men and women, some lying at table and others thronging up or down the aisles. And all were dressed in the gayest of costumes. Some in bright green, spotted with yellow moons and suns. Others in scarlet, studded with white or black death's heads. Still others in orange, with amethystine stars. The women were decked out even more grotesquely than the men—some being laced and frilled and padded and stuffed and painted and tinted and dimpled and dusted and beauty-patched and powdered, until they had lost all semblance unto human creatures. Some wore cherries of glass. Others, strings of dead birds. One was clad in a veil of tight gauze, through which her entire nakedness could be beheld, and round her neck clanked a string of poor men's bones. The woman boasted openly that the bones were the bones of the poor. "Those foolish fellows would surely have thrown away their lives in any case," said she; "what matter?" And the freak of gauze and nakedness and the bones of many toilers called forth the admiration of all the other women, who from time to time did press about her, shoving and elbowing mightily. "Hail to Madam Mos! Hail to the Domina, hail to the Madam! Her gown is by Monstrosus in Letitia!"

From time to time, too, the crowd was scattered by men bearing litters whereon were certain dead. Simon asked of a henchman, who were they that had died. The man said, Oh, certain ones that had perished in the duel, or else by assaults, or, it might be, in a drunken apoplexy, or else by their own hands.

"And where do they take those corpses?" asked the Jew.

"Into the Valley of Men's Bones," answered the henchman, "just out of sight of this castle—there to fritter away and finally to bleach out—as thou didst see, of a surety, when thou camest hither."

"And worship these people no god?"

"No god!" exclaimed the man in deep amaze. "All men worship gods, and those in this castle worship mostly Venus, Bacchus and Phallus.—What art thou, as in religion?"

"I am a Jew," said Simon of Cyrene. "And I worship the one and only God, which is Jehovah. His name was before the beginnings, and shall be after all the ends, and I would that thou and

all these were, as in such matters, even as I (though only a stranger) am."

But the henchman said, "A certain learned man hath declared that every man should have some religion, and some god or gods, but that it mattereth not extremely what religion or what gods he hath, but only that he should feel some band of connection or relation with some higher power. He was a very learned man."

And the Jew (before he had thought of the origin of his words) exclaimed, "By their fruits ye shall know them!"

The henchman said, "Thou shouldest be a Stoic. Get ye out of my way."

He went on farther, this Simon of the Curious Heart, coming, after a great while, unto an elevated, vast platform, whereon feasted Levitas himself—black-mustached and yellow and lantern-cheeked, flat-chested and fever-eyed, but shrieking insane delights in all that passed around him. And Simon beheld that the man was really young, although in his black mustachios were evil early hairs of white, while on his face were wrinkles as old as those which are seen on the face of the moon. And Levitas had with him up there bird-like singing girls, and wines which (as some of the henchmen said to Simon) were older than the years, and daring young men for companions in revelry, and hundreds of scattered perfumes, and hangings stained with strange oriental dyes, and feasting and fighting and dancing and jollity and death—for now and then some man did kill another.

And all the men and women, as they danced shamelessly before Levitas, sang foolish songs.

And when they had sung full many, then asked Simon of a man that was near and seemed half sober, but who had been, as he said, a goose-herd, and whose name (now that Levitas had raised him to some rank) was Lusor (or "sport-maker") Simon asked this fellow who the men or women were that had made these songs.

"The most of the songs were made," said the aforetime goose-herd, "by Porneius and Porneia, others by Frivolitas and Effeminatus. But best our Lord doth like the songs writ by Porneius and Porneia. The songs of Effeminatus and Frivolitas are full pleasant, but they go not deeply enough—so hath said our Lord. And he saith also, 'It is art that I want; what hath decency to do with art? Besides, I would have my songs be true to life, showing all its various sides, and there is no decent side. Morality is merely a lie whereby the truth is hidden; let us therefore not abide morality, but have art, which is truth.'"

"But," said Simon, "are all the people of Gaul of the same opinion about such matters?"

"By no means," said the goose-herd, "I mind me of the time when I dwelt in a village, and there were in that place many little tender songs, touching and sweet, and like to make men better. But, truly, the people who know about such things have said that all those songs are no true art, being moral and therefore incapable of being true. There is nothing true (they say) that is not immoral.—As for me, I follow the judgment of my Lord. I can no other."

Then gat the Lord up, even hollow-chested Levitas, and himself did sing full many a foolish little song, and tell full many a little foolish tale, in both of which, forever, some husband was a donkey, and the seducer of his wife a man of high nobility and great courage—till some one cried, "The bear! Cæsar! Let us have the play with the great bear, even Cæsar."

And the bear was brought, and placed within his pit, and a board with a hole in it set about his neck, and on the board was writ "Cæsar."

And Simon beheld that the bear had been starved nigh unto distraction. Men did tease and worry it exceedingly with long, strong poles whereon were fastened strips of bloody meat, and ever, as the bear did bite at the meat or seek to fasten on it with his paws, the men jerked suddenly the poles away and the meat with them.

Some one cried, "The hot honey! Bring the hot honey!"

And honey, boiling hot, was fetched and let down into the pit before the bear. The bear, being ravenous, and smelling the honey, ran up thereunto, and, ere he had had full time to discover that the honey was boiling hot, gulped him down the most of it, and then ran screaming round his cage, patting his stomach with his insane paws.

Said Simon unto some one, "Surely the Gauls are loyal to Cæsar."

But the man did shrug his shoulders, and pass on.

Then went some man down into the pit with a gleaming sword, saying: "Such and such contempt do people such as we have unto all the laws of this world, even as unto those of that which is yet to come."

He made a cunning pass or two, and slew the bear.

And the people cried, "So be it unto all law and all law-givers."

But Simon did not rejoice at such contempt to Cæsar (albeit he had been in Cæsar's mines). So he asked of an officer that was coming straight toward him and gazing upon him steadily: "When do these festivities cease?"

Said the officer, "Not at all. Neither day nor night, not yet at the end of a year. But what art thou to ask me questions? I come to apprehend thee."

Whither the Jew was taken or how far the distance, he endeavored not at all to guess. For he said, "I am wholly at the mercy of these."

He was led down by slow-winding, many-gated galleries far beneath the castle into the heart of the mountain.

And was thrust into a stinking pit, being loaded with chains, and locked securely up in the deep darkness of the pit.

There he abode for many days, hearing and seeing no one, save when a fat-fed servitor did bring him water or food.

On a long distant day he was taken before a subordinate officer of Levitas for trial. And at that time the charges first were told to Simon by a Gaul who hight Mandubrath. This name meant "Man of Black Treason," and its wearer was he that had killed the bear which had been placarded "Cæsar."

The indictment being read, did inform the Jew that, first of all, he was a Jew (a fact of itself highly culpable) and second, that, having secured by a certain residence in the land, a knowledge of the fortifications of the Castle of Levitas, he had formed the intention of divulging such knowledge to certain foreign powers, as, to wit, the British and the Caledonians and others of the regions hyperborean.

And they brought forth forged documents, with the ink scarce dry upon them, saying that Simon of Cyrene had writ them.

And, further, he charged (this man which had worried the bear they called "Cæsar" and which had cursed all law both of this world and the next) that Simon of Cyrene was no true observer of the laws, and, in a word, was a traitor to Cæsar.

It was finally charged that Simon was a slanderer of all the gods, denying especially the divinity of Cæsar, and that he had talked great impiety unto the retainers of Levitas.

And they convicted the Jew by false testimony, and would have sent him to the Devil's Isle—a place like unto the Mines of the Wretched, but that the Lord raised up a certain friend unto the Jew, which fought for him valiantly.

CHAPTER XXXV

Krieg, in Germania

In truth it was even as Skepticus had said to Simon about his two children, for that both of these had become Christians. At the

very foot of the cross, they had joined the company that followed Jesus. Yet Simon's eyes were holden, that he saw them not there. And, after Christ's resurrection, they were Christians more than ever. But Amahnah remained in the party of the synagogue.

Now, after a time, when neither Amahnah nor the children was able to learn from any man what had been done with her husband, then she and they took counsel together, at length deciding to go to the heart of the world, if necessary, in search of him.

So Amahnah sold the properties which she had, and sought out Parush and said unto him: "I have sold the properties I had, and now my boys and I would go in search of my husband. They indeed would make a Christian of Simon, but I would keep him ever as he was—a Jew. Come with us, therefore, thou and thy wife, Thorah, and guide us unto Rome, and be there as a perpetual counsellor (should we find him) unto my husband—as well as unto many others of the Jews which be in Rome, and might, without thee, in time become Christians. I have moneys and will recompense thee."

So it was agreed. But, at sea, a storm sprang up, and Parush, being a headstrong man, took away the rudder from the helmsman's hands, with this result, that the ship was shattered in pieces.

And the children of Simon came together and safely into a certain isle.

And Amahnah, and Parush with her, and his wife, Thorah—whose name, being interpreted, meaneth "The Law"—were also saved, but upon a different and far distant island.

And the belongings of Berith were all in the sea. Therefore saith Parush unto her, "My spouse and I fare on to Rome alone. For thou didst say thou wouldst recompense me, but now thou art no longer able, having nothing. Yea, as more of glory can be had by me for my scholarship in Rome than in Jerusalem, and quite as much of wealth, I go not back to Jerusalem, but on to Rome. Yet, as for thee, get hence: I am done with thee."

So Amahnah, after many grievous wanderings and hazardous, was brought, on a day, before an under officer of Cæsar, in an obscure city, and there condemned. Even as Simon himself had been condemned, and most unjustly, so also now was condemned Amahnah, or Leah.

And Amahnah did labor in the Mines not far from her husband, but this knew he not, nor, in any case, would have been able to come anigh her. But, knowing it not, he, when the mountain had fallen apart, and he had, by his own strivings, attained to a certain escape, thought not at all to look about for her. Even so, he might have

heard her outcry, but that, at the moment, his heart was full of a longing for the beams and bars of gold which he saw at no great distance in the smelting sheds.

Therefore ran he straight away from her, and would have heard her not, though she called with the voice of an archangel. In time he vanished utterly.

But she, as best she could, followed, crying: "Unheard, unheard, unheard!"

Yet did she never quite overtake Simon. And she passed by the side of the country where the seven that were specially sinful dwelt, and she went not into the Castle of Levitas. Yet, at a certain distance, and as well as she could, she followed her spouse, even Simon of Cyrene.

For many long years followed she him.

And there never was placed on her brow the triliterate phylactery of shame which had been set upon her husband's. Yet, too, as she journeyed, she was more and more shamefully put upon, and at length was apprehended as were she a mere runaway slave (this aforetime happy Child of God) and sold to a great beast and hypocrite, who was also a wildly cruel master.

And Nea Diatheka, too, had been released from the Mines by the landslide. And her husband, on a happy day, found her, and dwelt with her. And she went ever with him on his wanderings, and was never again made separate and away from him.

. . . . For many long weary days Simon of Cyrene and his Ethiopian had travelled in the wilds of Germany. "Take ye the loads on asses till that ye get well into Germania Barbara," the Master of the Forges in Toletanum had said unto him. "Then take ye the packs on a sledge; for, as ye pass twixt the marks in Germany, seeking to reach those distant places where the steel of Toledo is not known, and where, in consequence, ye can make the largest profit, ye will find that the roads are either mud or snow, and wheels will turn not, neither will asses carry or thrive there."

And now for weary days the Jew and his servant had been beyond the Rhine, marching, marching, over the barely distinguishable highways, in the wide, boggy, treacherous clearings which lay betwixt the marks of this tribe and of that. Interminable reaches of dim-veiling rain, or of marshy, silent landscape, set with millions of birdless spruce and fir trees, and, ever brooding above the whole (symbol of eternity) the dim, inexorable, motionless sky! Such was the way to the land of the Saxons, the place where Krieg ruled, and

where the highest price in gold and amber could be demanded for the weapons which Simon haled upon his sledge.

There was fog just now all round about Simon and his servant, and the twain picked out their way most carefully amid the patches of bubbling bog.

After a time the wind blew, and the veil of thick mist began to rend asunder.

All at once a great wide tear ran through the obstruction, and, as the patches of fog rolled off like curtains, the travellers beheld, at a distance, two vast bodies of soldiers, apparently composed of different German tribes, rush full upon each other, with harsh, piercing shrieks and dull din and clangor of metal.

The wind changed, and the curtains of mist rolled back, shutting the insane struggle from the sight, silencing, too, its hideous accompaniment of incredible noise.

Then the two travellers, appalled, began to fetch a circuit far about the region where the battle was, while the soul of the Jew smote him sorely, for that he had brought hither upon his sledge the weapons of death.

"Didst thou also see, O Weary One?" said Simon to Cush, the Ethiopian.

"I saw, Master.—May I speak?"

"Speak, Cush."

"War is all these people think on," said Cush. "That is what I heard both in Gallia and Spain. Why not Cæsar make them stop their wars—not strong to do it?"

"Cæsar hath here no power, foolish fellow. We are farther than his swords can reach. Over and over he hath sent his strongest soldiers hither, but they have either not come back at all, or else have returned much wiser. And Cæsar hath made his compacts with them, the which they ever disregard. For here there be many Cæsars, and each will have it that he is himself a Ruler of the World."

"All fierce tribes?"

"They are all fierce tribes here, and each, as thou dost see, hath for its protection against all others, its own set territory with marks all round about it. And in between these marks are neutral passages of clearing wherethrough all men may travel (if indeed they take their chances on the half-built roads, as well as on storms and beasts) yet not intrude on the ground of any tribe at all."

"Doth Pum rule here?"

"Who is Pum?"

"Him big spirit. Him see all where. Him see all time. Him make brave men win battle. Him no mercy."

"Yes, Cush," said the master, "they have other gods here, yes and goddesses, and the children of goddesses and gods. Yet I believe that Pum (callest thou him not so?) the god that hath no mercy, reigneth here supreme."

"May I speak again, Master?"

"Speak, Cush."

"You not worship Pum?"

"No, Cush, I do not worship Pum."

"Who you worship?"

"I worship Jehovah."

"Jehovah big god?"

"A very big God indeed, O excellent Cush. A God of justice, yet of mercy also. He made all things that are, and all the other spirits in the universe are subject unto Him, Jehovah. There was never a beginning of the days of this God, nor shall there ever be an end of them. But all the other gods shall perish."

"Jehovah like Jew man most?"

"Jehovah looketh after His people with an especial care. Hence, O Despicatus, it was that I did find thee, as thou didst wander in Toletanum, there where I did need thee. It was the Lord's hand that sent thee back into Spain, whenafter thou didst leave me in the tavern of the drunkards."

"Me heard Master say he go Toletanum some time. Me want meet Master again."

"Yea, O Cush, but the Lord it was that made thee wish to behold again thy master. For behold, I could hardly, without thee, have brought this load so far into the forest. The Lord, as thou seest, hath had an especial care over me."

"Lord not let Jew man suffer?"

"The Lord hath let the Jews to suffer, O Despicatus. Yea, He hath given them innumerable tribulations, and with His own very hand. But ever it was for this, that He would school them and shape them to His liking, that they might subserve His purpose. So it was prophesied, even in olden time. And never He leaveth His Beloved to perish utterly. For behold He hath chosen him out from all the other nations, and will have him as His priest."

"Me must worship Him, Jehovah?"

"It is better, O Cush, thou shouldest worship Him. Yet if thou failest in this matter, He will not be bitter against thee, for He knoweth thou canst not understand."

"He tell Master things Master have to do, like Master tell Cush?"

"Just the same, O Cush. And there are very many books, and very many teachings, forms and ceremonies, which have never at all been written into books, but all of which my people have to know and to live by, for, upon those people of mine there rests a special responsibility unto Jehovah. But, as for thee, O Cush, and for all the nations of this populous earth, saving and excepting mine own nation alone, it is solely necessary that a certain seven of sacred commands be kept."

"What commands, Master?"

"They are these, O excellent servant." And the Jew then set about to inform the Ethiopian concerning the seven Noachidian maxims: how that it was very wrong to steal and to lie, to feast on the limbs of living animals. And so on. And when he had finished the whole of the maxims, he practiced his servant upon them, till most of them could be remembered by that man.

Then declared Cush, "Master's God now my God. I keep seven rules also. Then Master's Jehovah keep me too, and save me in Germania Barbara?"

"He will save thee and keep thee, excellent servant, till that He calleth thee to thy fathers—and afterward also."

But when a certain time had passed, and when the Jew fell to reflecting, he was wroth against himself for speaking as he had done to Cush. Said he, "What manner of man is this that would eat at the table of Abraham? And what am I that I should teach him at all concerning Jehovah? Is he not full to the overflowing with the horrors of idolatry? Can he understand the ways of God?"

So, when the negro asked again concerning the religion of the Jew, the Master cut him short with biting words, saying after, to himself: "Now, Christopherus, belike, would answer the negro's questions, yea and encourage the fellow's curiosity that he should ask him many another. For, if Cush were in the very deep of Africa, thither would Christopherus journey that he might speak to him concerning Christ. But Christopherus is an idolater, I a son of Abraham. I will not instruct heathen. But let Jesus and His like instruct them as concerning the idolatry of Jesus." Later, when he had looked upon the black again, and had seen how weary his face was, he felt much pity.

Then spake Simon to him about many interesting things which had happened in the wide course of his life—not in any wise as concerning Adonai or Jesus, but only as about his own life as a shepherd lad; his friendship with the shining Lampadephorus; his slave-life

in the belly of the Babylonia and again in the Mines of the Wretched; eke of his trial at the seat of Levitas, and of how Grammaticus, that celebrated writer (he and his friends), merely from simple love of justice to all men, had interceded and fought manfully for him, the Jew, whence had come his liberation even after he had been condemned to the Devil's Isle. And then, seeing how much wearier still the Ethiopian did grow from his work, he said once more: "Cush."

"I hear, Master."

"Get thee behind the sledge and push, O Weary One, and see that the heavy burden doth not fall.—So is it not easier unto thee?"

"It is easier.—May I speak, Master?"

"Speak, Cush."

"Master, I fear."

"Thou fearest! What, O excellent servant?"

"The bog."

"And why dost thou fear the bog, O foolish one? It is covered with beautiful flowers."

"Because of the green scum lying on it, and the bubbles, and the dark deep spirits which send the bubbles up."

"Cush, thou art foolish. There are no spirits underneath the bog."

"Master— May I speak?"

"Speak, Cush."

"Master, I fear that thou wilt not go safely. See, let me run before and try the way. See there, Master, the road is lower than the bog. How know which bog? And see—I throw stone—yonder. It sinks—all bog. And see—I throw stone out yonder. It sinks. All bog. Now see, Master. I take this branch from fir tree. Throw him out. Sink too, sink too. Fir tree branch should float. Dark deep spirits pull him down.

"And see! O Master!—big thick snake! Come get Cush. See, he come get Cush. That snake big, deep, dark spirit. O Master, Master, Master!"

The terrified servant ran past Simon, and away from the serpent, which ran also, on its course, and dipped beneath the slimy surface out of sight.

But Cush was also in the bog.

"I sink, Master. Help, help, Master. I sink. Come quick: I sink."

"Thou art safe enough, Cush. Be only quiet. Soon will I release thee."

He went and cut quickly a slender fir-tree and laid it out across the boggy surface. Yet would it nowise reach to the Ethiopian.

Then cried the latter, "See, O Master, the deep dark spirit pulleth me down. See!"

Simon went forth swiftly, and cut him another sapling, much longer than the first. But, by now, the Ethiopian's shoulders were underneath the mire. Only the head remained. "Will thy Lord help me, O Master, or careth He for slaves?"

"He careth for all His creatures. Be quiet, O Cush. I also will help thee. Let me get but this—"

Then the slave gave a wild shout, making a tremendous struggling, which only sunk him deeper. A number of bubbles shot up all round about his face, he gave once more a great, gurgling lurch, threw his hands up quickly beyond his head, and had totally vanished.

Simon of Cyrene looked round in a great maze.

He also listened for a time, as if he really expected to hear some well known voice again.

But never a sound came out of the landscape, nor was any thing of life astir within it. Over the whole (dark symbol of eternity) stretched the inscrutable, inexorable, impassive sky.

By a sudden impulse, the Jew cried out: "Cush! Cush! O Cush!"

He thought, for a moment, that a sudden step was just behind him. He turned, then believed that it must have occurred in the opposite direction. So he turned again.

He looked at the sledge and the great gray-covered burdens on it, as if some sort of solution might be expected there.

He went up close to the bog, and gazed at the spot where the servant had gone under. No sign of sound or motion.

The voice of the Ethiopian, so full of humble cheer and of simple life, still sounded in the astonished chambers of his brain, and sounded on and on until he could scarcely distinguish its words from absolute reality.

To break the solitude, he placed his hands straight up before him like a brazen trumpet, and shouted: "Great is Jehovah, and who shall understand Him?"

The strangely muffled, indifferent echo came back out of the vague distance, crying, feebly: "Who shall understand Him?"

"And His ways are ways of righteousness."

"Righteousness," said the echo, yet more feebly.

Then the Jew turned and viewed the interminable landscape, with

its countless spruces and firs, its infinity of dangers, its absolute, unguessed horror of stone-like silence and solitude.

To break that solitude again, he placed his hands up to his mouth, and cried in a voice of agony: "When Jehovah is afar, by whom shall we then be saved?"

"By his well-beloved son, even Jesus, the Christ," came a faint, almost undiscernible answer, out of a wooded and distant hill.

And Simon started and blanched. He said, "It is now again that I hear in the world of outwardness a voice that is in mine own soul only."

He cast the thongs of the sledge quickly about his neck and shoulders, and went on deeper and deeper into the dangers and the silence of the forest. From time to time he thought he heard voices calling him, but he looked not back.

Once, as he journeyed, solitary and sore afeard, there grew up in his heart, because of those endless wilds of bog and forest and everlasting canopy of motionless gray sky, such a soul-disturbing mood that all the things about him began to play upon his overactive imagination, as it were on a high-strung harp. He began to believe that the forest behind him was full of cries from Cush, who (as he thought) had not really sunken in the bog at all, but was shouting: "Master, Master! Wait till I catch up with thee. O Master! Master!"

At last, so fearful did the strange pleadings become, that, only to solace the silent but overwhelming outcries of his fantasy, he turned about, and fared backward—backward two whole days and nearly a third, in the midst of a blinding snow storm, until he had come to the place where his servant had gone under.

There was the trimmed sapling which he himself had laid upon the surface of the bog. It was still undisturbed, though covered with snow. There was the calm face of the unmoved marsh, there were the fir-trees—endless rows of silent witnesses that all was even as erst it had been, saving only for the snow. There, too, was the gray and gloomy heaven arching over the whole landscape—unperturbed, unquestioning, unanswering. "Would that, O Jehovah, thou mightest have come forth out of thy remoteness that the life of the servant of thy servant, even Cush, could have been spared for thee and for me."

He turned onward to his task once more, lonely and weary of heart, and gently wondering from time to time what purpose there was in his whole life—or if there was any. Then he would

console himself with the profit he would make from this expedition, and how he then might go to better places than the wilderness.

And, on a day, as he pulled wearily at the thongs of his backward-holding sledge, he slipped and fell into the bog. And the sledge went not in after him.

At first it appeared that the bog was shallow in the part wherein he had floundered, but yet, as he endeavored to extricate himself and get to a certain island of dry land, he found that his feet were sinking deeper and deeper in. And at length the mire had grown so profound that even his arms and shoulders were covered by it, and the more he attempted by his own mere strength to get up, the deeper he sank on downward.

Nor could he turn about without settling his feet more deeply.

So he stood as still as possible, crying in spirit: "Lord God of Abraham! At last I am lost. Thou wast indeed to shape me: to hew me and to carve me and to get me to thy liking. Yet lettest thou the heathen triumph over thy servant, and the great bog to swallow up his bones.

"Yea, even as Despicatus did sink within the mud, so sink I in the mire. And thou carest not.

"None will wish at all to find me—only mine enemies—for they are these that are round about, I know. They will laugh when they see me, and will hold me in derision. They will hew me into pieces, and will make them little playthings of my ribs."

Then the sky grew darker and a curtain half of snow and half of rain began to sift down through the trees. And a great, fat, venomous serpent, with uplifted head and brightly curious, beady and impenitent eyes, came hissing and bending and slipping, nearer and nearer unto him, across the rising surfaces of the bog.

But all of a sudden, he found that he sank not in the way that Cush had sunken, but that his feet came firm against a stone. And he caught the serpent in his hands, and slew it, and slung it afar, crying: "Zur Yisrael!" (Rock of Israel).

And he found that he could walk along in the bog with his feet upon the rock. So he came at last to dry land, where he fell on his knees and cried: "Thou hast not chosen thy priest in vain, O Adonai. Not in vain, not in vain. For behold, there was no man by to succor me (as I would have succored Despicatus) and yet I live—not in vain, not in vain!"

And the woodland gave him back an echo, "Not in vain!" And he took it for an excellent omen, and said: "Though I understand thee not, Adonai, I will know that thou art ever with me, and I will

always keep on." And he went about, and took up the thongs of the sledge again.

And when many days had been fulfilled, he began to observe, on either hand, but yet at a considerable distance from the neutral territory through which he journeyed, sparse collections of conical red huts, like tiny, widely separated, blood-red mushrooms. Round each hut was a field, in which played multitudes of children, thrusting their tiny swords this way and that, or casting little spears.

Once, just a short way ahead of him, a wild boar plunged across open country, with dozens of naked warriors rushing and shrieking behind. No one paid the slightest attention to the Jew.

After a time the way got lonelier than ever it had been before. Never a sound of man, or sight of human habitation. The wind played dirges in the great trees, and again the heart of the Jew was heavy.

There began a drifting snow. The cold became greater and greater. So the weary one searched out a place where spruce and fir were thickest. Here, as in a tiny room, all dark, he waited the cessation of the storm. Having eaten, he fell asleep.

And, as he slept, he dreamed that Skepticus, the sordid messenger who had come to him in Gaul, stepped into his chamber of darkness, and, standing before him, said: "See, O Jew! The unmeaning storm is all a-rage without. Is not this like life—a storm, a tempest, a whirling, a senseless struggling of the elements, without design, without purpose in the to and fro of atoms? The flakes know nothing, and the winds that fling them crazily about—what also do they know? So, O Jew, are the seconds of thy life, and all the forces that do rend thee."

Said the Jew, "Yet my feet—they found a rock."

But Skepticus answered and said, "It was accident. Some accidents are good to us, some bad."

But when, toward morning, the Jew looked forth on the landscape, there in the sky-clear moonshine, his two eyes, wondering, beheld the softly waving drifts of endless beauty, ridged and fluted and polished as never a Greek had done to costliest of stone. Beauty unutterable! Silence! Perfection! And then, as he looked still closer with eyes that had learned to seek out evil signs and coming misfortunes, he beheld, all round, yet at some distance, the tracks of multitudes of wolves. But never a beast had come anigh the accessible place wherein he had so carelessly slept. Then, as he passed, having eaten, with his heavy load steep up the snowy slope, struggling still toward the sun's rising and the land of the Saxons, the night-made

tracks grew thicker, and a sound smote him like a knife—the shrill, prolonged, and immensely sickening outcry of a lonesome wolf.

Just at this moment, the beast himself appeared, rushing straight down toward Simon from the hill-top—a great, white, gangling thing, all ribs, bright eyes, shagginess and hunger.

Now Simon would have drawn his sword, but that the beast, after a moment's gaze upon him, turned and ambled quickly in another direction, while, from over the self-same hill-top whence the wolf had come, appeared two men. The foremost was a tall, gaunt figure, in white from neck to feet, so that, at the first, he scarce stood out from the snow-field. On his head was a high hat, round his neck a gold chain. The look of the man was crafty and treacherous. Behind him, at a very respectful distance, came a low, dark, hump-backed fellow, clad in black furs, hatless and with flowing locks. In his hands were a hammer and a small anvil. The two glanced up and saw the Jew, stood at gaze for a moment, then ran back before he could call out "Hael!"

He toiled on up the hill and, just as he reached the top, paused in his tracks, for his eyes were resting not upon a humpbacked smith and a priest of Woden, for these had vanished utterly, but on a sight that turned his heart to stone.

Before him towered a man—if man indeed he were—fierce, gigantic, and detestable. Clad in garments of blood red, he stood, or, rather, mountained, with arms folded, speaking not, stirring not, only glaring with cold blue eyes, filled to the full with senseless pride and ineradicable hate.

"Thy name?" demanded the Jew.

"What doest *thou* here," inquired a voice like the hissing of Ophidion and the sound of a Roman trumpet combined.

"I seek a certain warrior, hight Krieg. King he is of all the Saxons."

"I am Krieg,"[1] said the mighty one. "My name meaneth War. Thy name, thy business?"

"I am Simon of Cyrene, a Jew of the great family of Aaron. Coming from afar, I bring thee benefits."

"Thou art a king," said Krieg. "Thou hast the size and strength. Draw, then, and fight with me, or I do swear I will kill thee on the spot whereon thou standest."

"Kill me not," said Simon, "for I come as a friend and guest, and have some special business wherein thy heart will delight—if only thou be not overhasty and spoil all things."

[1] For obvious reasons, allegoric as well as onomatopœic, I have given to the old chief the modern name, "Krieg," instead of the Old Saxon, "VVIG."

"What dost thou bring me—aught wherewith we shall fight?"

"Wherewith thou mayest fight, O mighty Krieg."

"Swords?"

"Javelins—the points thereof. And, puissant Krieg, the like of these points thine eyes have never ere now beheld."

The King laughed scornfully. "A merchant! I took thee for a king. Thou art a mere bagman going about to sell things! A merchant!"

"Both a merchant and a priest, which is to say a king, O Krieg, for see! with us, a man may be both priest and merchant and king. But, about the business. If thou disdainest not to see these points—"

The King's eyes glittered. "I can take thy points away from thee, also bury thee in the snow. Come! The day dawneth! Draw! I would not kill thee while thou art defenseless."

Then said Simon, quietly, for he understood his man: "I will fight with thee presently, and then I will show thee the way in which I shall fight. Meantime, I have brought thee, O Krieg, upon these long, stout runners, the points of a thousand javelins. If they be not better than any thou hast seen before, if they be not unturnable by man or beast or hardest tree, then purchase not. And I will forthwith fight thee, and go on unto some other tribe. Or if, though the points shall prove of the finest, thou dost not care at all to buy them, then also do not purchase. And I will forthwith fight thee, and then leave thee, and go to some other tribe. The Hermanduri, the Angrivarii—"

"Fight!" snarled the King. "First fight. Then talk we of javelins and gold. Fight! Draw! Fight!" And he drew his short Saxon blade.

But Simon of Cyrene disarmed him, as Lampadephorus had taught him how to do, and he grasped the giant, even Krieg the King of the Saxons, by his very middle, and cast him, and then took him up and hurled him headlong, saying in his spirit: "There is not any way to get this man to like me whatsoever, but by giving him ill use."

And the King ran up again, and gave a great shout, and behold, from the woods came running multitudes of warriors, all crying: "Contest! Slaughter! Blood!"

Then saw Simon of Cyrene that it was well he had drawn no sword upon the King, for that so he should have perished miserably, whether he might have fallen beneath the King's blows or have prevailed over him.

And the Jew beheld among the foremost of the crowd the white-

robed priest he had seen but a moment before, and, behind, the smith with his anvil. Nearby was a beautiful woman, with hair like the sun arising, and eyes like clear blue stones. She stood at the side of a dozen men who were plainly her brothers—and all, he could see, were like the great King, Krieg. So he knew them for Krieg's children.

The King said to them all, "Peace!" Ye see that Drugi-thing, priest of the All-father, hath told us truly of the dark-haired enemy about to arrive. Now saith the dark-haired man that he bringeth unto us javelin points, the which he would sell to us (being merely merchant) for amber and gold rings. And he sweareth the points are harder and sharper than any which we, the Saxons, have seen in all our battles. Is it not so, Simon of Cyrene?"

The Jew confirmed him.

"Bring, then," said the King, "a pole to be for a javelin."

The Jew took the pole, and straightway fastened into it a point, and bound the point tightly upon it.

Then said to him the Cuning, or King: "I will contend against thee in the throwing. Seest thou yon oak that groweth on the second hill which far o'ertoppeth the nearer? Into that we will both throw—thou with thy wonderful javelin, I with mine—and then we shall see whose point is turned the less."

"What!" cried the Jew, "meanest thou only the tree upon the second hill? But behold! beyond that second standeth a third, far higher, and on that eminence a mere little sapling. On the summit of the hill it ariseth, seeming to hold toward heaven two tiny hands, as if in supplication. At that sapling let us throw."

The chief laughed him to great scorn. "The gods have maddened thee. Liveth there any man at all that can throw so far as even to the lowermost portion of that hill?"

Answered Simon of Cyrene, "See!"

So he cast. And the javelin flew, and the tree was cloven.

Then for a time the multitude stood silent, as a great new star had come into the heavens, amazing them. And old Krieg stood voiceless also, yet the Jew perceived that he looked upon him with a softer eye.

Then was there brought back unto the chief by a runner, the javelin, and the chief took it and looked upon it long and with love, for behold! the point thereof was neither broken nor in anywise turned.

So the chief shouted to his assembled warriors, "Hael, freemen! We will take these javelin points!" He began to ask of the Jew

concerning his price. But at this there issued from the assembly the great white priest and the fur-clad humpback, they whom the Jew had met behind the white wolf. Said these unto the King, in a low voice: "It is not lawful thus to buy, but only in assembled council, the Moot of all freemen, upon the moot-plain, near the hill and tree of Thor. Let us therefore go thither. And let all free men of the Saxons be summoned to the hill by the hornsmen, and so we will reason about these matters, Whether it be truly profitable to buy, and whether it be not profitable, and who this Simon of Cyrene is, and as toucheth many other matters."

Then the Cuning, or King, even Krieg, said to the Jew: "It is law. I must abide by it. Follow me."

And he, with some of his followers, took the Jew apart, and led him a little way into the forest, and there, at the top of the hill, in a place where the snow had been scraped away, Krieg stamped on the ground. And behold, a great lid rolled forth from an opening in the ground, and a swollen face appeared, all dirty and with yellow hair round it, saying: "What is to do? What is to do? Pardon! The Cuning! Hael unto thee, Krieg, our puissant Cuning."

"Freeman," said the King, "I make thee responsible for this, my guest. See thou after him until the Moot of free men is held, and we have decided what further shall be done as concerning him. Then will we send and summon him. And thou mayest then come after him unto the Moot."

But the Jew, at that, would nowise suffer the King to go at once, but laid hands upon him firmly, and demanded: "O powerful Krieg, before I release thee from my grasp, here where I have thee firmly, where thou and I are equal, merely man unto man (for thy few followers here I account as nothing), give me thy carefullest promise, and vow unto me by whatsoever thou holdest to be most sacred—Woden, the great Allfather and the King of War—swear by that god of thine that, should I leave this place when thy messenger cometh for me, and should go with him unto the moot-plain, that then no harm shall come to me, but that I shall be as a guest, and that thou wilt well entreat me, and, if the freemen find that they want my javelin-points, that then thou wilt give me for these a hundred rings of gold and twice that weight of amber. Also promise that whensoever it may please me, I may leave thee and go back into Gallia or Spain, or whithersoever I wish and on whatsoever business, whether it be to bring more of the javelin-points (and, it may be, better ones) or on any other business I may choose."

The King looked up and smiled upon him, and he said, without faltering: "I swear it. Thou shalt be free to go."

So the Jew suffered him and his followers to depart for the moot-plain, and took fresh courage, for he had seen that the King delighted in the weapons he had brought and would still want others like them.

Now the freeman which was the owner of the house, went down first thereinto. And the Jew descended also into the dark opening, where his feet got hold of a safe ladder. And so he continued to descend till he found himself in the center of a capacious, if badly lighted, room.

"Hael and welcome," said the freeman, "if that thou knowest a better way to do anything. I am called 'Craft.' Some say it is because I am strong, some because I am skilful."

"Hael to thee, Craft," replied the Jew. "I am Simon of Cyrene, priest and merchant."

"For that I care not," cried Craft bluntly. "But for this I care—whether or not thou knowest better ways of doing things. See! I study each day, and on every day, that I may find better ways whereby anything at all may be accomplished.—I am not a fighter."

The Jew's heart grew warm indeed, for that, in this underground habitation, he had found such a man. "What makest thou yonder, excellent Craft?"

Cried the man, "A heat-place, eke a smoke-guide. Knowest thou why Saxons, at the winter's approach, leave the little round huts, and why they come down into places like this? It is for that the cold would freeze them if they staid above. So they come down into the earth, bringing with them the kine, the kinder, and the horses."

Now Simon looked about, and soon, in the clearing dark, beheld long rows of cattle, and, beyond, a solitary horse.

"Live ye all together and so?" asked Simon.

"So and all together," responded Craft. "It is custom. There is greater brightness, all the same, above, and more, much more, is to be seen there. So I build me a heat-place, eke a smoke-guide. In the Seli of the Cuning, up in the brightness, at the middle of each room, is a stone. Thou shalt see. On the stone, of a winter, there is started a fire. Yet it is, even so, not altogether pleasant in the Seli of the Cuning. For the smoke, it will sometimes out through the hole in the roof that is made for it, and sometimes it wandereth about the room. So it worketh into the eyes, and blackeneth the golden faces of the women, and maketh all peoples to cough loudly.

In the little red huts of the freemen and the smaller red huts of the cheorls, there is not even a stone for fire. Also, the thatch would catch therefrom and the whole house burn, if a fire there was.

"So I make me a box for the fire in the center of the room, also a guide for the smoke. I will later do the same thing in the little round house in the sunlight. And the little round house will not take fire. Yet it will be warm.

"Behold! have I not built well, with sticks and mud only?

"And see! there is fire within the mud-box now, and out of the box goeth the smoke up the straight guide, and it filleth not the room.

"I shall one day build me a bigger reed-hut, yonder in the outer light, and, in it, a mud-box with a smoke-guide."

Now Simon could have kissed this muddy fellow, for that his thoughts were not in any wise about war, but only the betterment and comfort of mankind. "Thou art not like a many others here. They indeed love solely to kill, but thou not."

"And why not love to kill?" asked Craft, lifting childlike shaggy brows. "Are not we better than the Hermanduri and the Semnones and all these other tribes which be about? Why ought we not to kill them? That is what they are for, is it not so?—to be killed by us."

"Could ye not all live together even like brothers?" asked Simon.

"By the spear of Woden! Do not even brothers fight each other? What for brothers? Brothers should see each other's blood, if they like it so well. And the Hermanduri and Semnones—they are only to be slaughtered. Said not Woden, the Allfather, unto our Cuning and Eorl, even Krieg, said he not unto him, 'Go after the Hermanduri and the Semnones, as after the wild-boars of the forest? For thee were they made, and for thy glory and thy goriness. Behold! it is I who said to thee, "Rule." And now it is I again who say to thee, "Kill!" Else hast thou glory in anything?'

"And we freemen, what be we? Were we not indeed made for the Eorl, even Krieg, to get him power, and to get him honor, and to get him glory? Was it not for just such things that we, the freemen, were made, and the cheorls even much more so?"

And the freeman would have related to the Jew the myths of the gods of the Germans—those great heavenly fighters. But the Jew prevented him. "All these things have I heard in Gallia, and they like me not a little. I had rather, much rather, O mighty Craft, be instructed by thee in the ways whereby to build the mud-box for the red fire and the way-out for the black smoke."

But Craft, the freeman, would not speak of these things again, but said to the Jew full many a long story about the German gods, also battles from Hellia even unto Asgard and from Asgard back to Hellia. And he said unto Simon that the Gauls were all liars, for they told the old tales about the German's gods in such fashion as to make seem that the Germans were a bloody people. But the Jew perceived very clearly that the stories were bloodier by far as Craft told them than ever he had heard them in Gallia, Aquitania, Hispania, or any other part whatsoever. So, that the man might speak concerning other matters, the Jew inquired: "Why paint ye all your houses of a red hue?"

" 'Tis the color of blood," answered Craft, "and there is no other color like unto it for beauty."

Then remembered the Jew that he was faint for hunger, and he quoth as much, and Craft called out to the wif as she sat in her place among the kine, and she set out cheeses on a board and flesh both of deer and horses and wolves. But, for the milk, the wif said to the Jew: "Go to the cow and milk her into thine own mouth." But the father of the house stepped suddenly apart. Opening the cattle door which stood in the side wall of the hill, he shouted like a trumpet of brass: "It is to eat. O ye children of Craft, come quickly."

Swifter than light came darting through the cattle-door, first one then another of the children of Craft—tall and straight and sunny-headed, and wholly unafraid of anything at all. The next to the oldest came in last, for he held by the throat a full-grown wolf. "I killed him without sword-point or javelin or club," said he to the father.

"Thou!" cried the father angrily, "thou wilt get thine eyes scratched if thou use not weapons on a wolf." He struck the child (whose name, as he said to Simon, was Woodcraft) a resounding whack on his head.

"Anger not me," said the son, who did not even touch the stricken spot, "for Firecraft, here, was about to be eaten by him, and my weapons were not nigh. Moreover, I shall consume his flesh, and so shall get braver even than what I am."

But the father said to them all that care was as good sometimes as bravery, and thus he continued counselling his brood till the meal was over and he cried: "The Balls!"

At this the children shot from the eat-board, straightway returning with round, bearded objects which they began to trundle.

"The kinder got them from the palings about my cone-house,"

explained Craft. One and then another of the balls he lifted up, boasted (if boasting it were) of his exploits in the battles of the twelvemonth. "This was the head of Yellow-hair (I had to hit him twice). This of Wood-wise (he was easier). These the heads of Fork-beard, of Red-beard and Long-beard. These six here— What sayest, O Simon of Cyrene? Come back, on a day, for thou art very welcome at our eat-board. In any case, I soon will follow thee to the Moot."

The children echoed, "Welcome, stranger, at our eat-board. But anger us not at all at any time."

"And bring us always excellent spear-points," added the father.

"Bring us always excellent spear-points, and everything with which to kill," echoed the children.

But the Jew, having arisen into the world of light, espied a cheorl coming toward him, a man of gigantic stature with a great red beard, a mass of flame-like hair, and enormously long arms. "Thou hast come for me?"

"I have come."

The Jew went with him, a Sabbath day's journey or more, deeply and yet more deeply into the gloomy woods.

A wind sprang up suddenly, and began to moan in innumerable pines. Above the tree-tops solitary clouds scurried from place to place, as seeking, and never finding, a shelter. His grim conductor, drawing a sword, motioned toward a narrow pass that led more deeply still into the forest. He explained, "I am here to remain: thou to go yonder. Go."

The Jew, so bidden, went.

Rounding the corner of a great, riven rock, he suddenly beheld— the vast place of assembly.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Seli-Secg

At the farther end of the moot-plain was a lofty hill, with a single giant oak upon its summit. On the plain, this side the hill, stood the whole moot-crowd, hatless giants, each grasping a great shield and a *suerd*. The multitude was silent, looking with stern blue eyes at the Jew.

Now Simon, for a moment, stopped stock still, feeling a presentiment of evil such as he had never known before.

His eyes caught sight of the altar underneath the oak. The white-clad priest, Drugi-thing, he with the treacherous eyes, was just issuing from behind the oak, leading a tall black horse.

The horse was thrown, and, being bound, was cast by the priest's assistants up upon the altar.

At a sweep the priest cut the horse's throat, and the King ran up first of all and drank of the blood. Next, his own many sons. Next unto these, his fair daughter. Then all freemen came, in pairs, and with shields and *suerds,* as fast as the priest cried off their names: "Wood-wise and Long-hand, Plow-holder and Red-beard, Wood-father and Wood-teacher, Hand-grip and Iron-hand, Strike-quick and Fight-hard, War-long and Kill-soon, Wolf-choker and Man-stabber," with hundreds and hundreds of pairs of other warriors with fierce and insatiable names.

Then, when all had drunken, the priest of all craftiness, even Drugi-thing, the man with the ever-shifting eyes, prayed to the war-god Thor (as well as also unto other lords of battles, of which there were many) that the courage and the strength of the horse should straightway pass into the hearts and bones of all them that had drunk of the blood this day.

Thereat thought Simon, "Behold the trap that now I am come into. If, perchance, in what I am yet to accomplish, I should prove cowardly, these men will of a surety slay me. Yet, if I appear unto them brave, they will wish to drink my blood, that my spirit may be theirs. Moreover, the smith is jealous for that I have come with better javelin-points than his hand can fashion or his brain devise. And the priest—O Jehovah! doth he not feel that I am surely his competitor, I whose God is indeed an only god, a god of purity, righteousness and mercy?"

Then he heard, as in an evil dream, his own strange name called out from the plain. His limbs seemed as water, while his tongue clove fast to his gums for dryness.

So he said in his spirit, "In thee, Jehovah, I take my refuge. Bend down thine ear to me, and listen to a son of Abraham and to the husband of the Covenant. Shall my blood be spilt in the snow and my bones left in a far-away land? Shall the birds exalt themselves above me? Thou seest how sorely thy servant is afflicted, and knowest the terrors that encompass him. To thee I cling, God of my fathers. Be merciful, O Jehovah, unto me, for I see none here but enemies, and the strength of mine arms will nowise prevail, unless thou enclose me in thy hand. Rescue me, therefore, lest I become utterly ashamed. I have cried to thee, Jehovah. Let the distress be unto the wicked. Jehovah, O Jehovah!"

Then his heart was straightway lifted up. He gat himself together, took courage, and was very strong once more, and walked

on down into the silent plain of assembly, among those men of much blood and all hate.

Whenas he reached the center of the lane of warriors, which closed up all round about him in a circle, then the King of the Saxons, even Krieg, drew anigh to him and placed a heavy hand upon his shoulder. And the priest, even Drugi-thing, came up closer, and stood before those twain, crying to the multitude: "Be silent, high and low, for the King will speak."

Said Krieg, "Saxons all, freemen and true vassals, this is the fifth day of the week—the day sacred unto Thor. As ye all saw, the lots were cast, and they were favorable. Also, the horse was sacrificed, and behold the signs were again favorable. It is therefore left to us mortals by all the gods to say whether we shall buy this merchant's weapons or shall not buy them, or whether we shall take them without payment and slay him, or whether we shall indeed seize them without payment and yet shall let him go unscathed. In any case, the priest, even Drugi-thing (who hath been both in Spain and in Gaul and in Italy) hath vowed that he will find for us the forge that hath made these points. He hath vowed, and he voweth not in vain. What therefore say ye? Let any freeman speak his mind. All in this assembly have equal rights."

There was one man there, then, in all the assembly, who, taking the Cuning at his word, objected thus: "Why hast thou not said, O Krieg, that thou didst promise this man a safe conduct, and that for his javelin-points he ought to receive (if only the gods were willing) a hundred heavy rings of gold and twice their weight in bright amber?"

At this, the eldest son of the King stepped out, and, saying "Thy name is Craft, but mine is Craftier," slew the man. His blood flew over the prince's shoulder on the face of the Jew. And behold, the man that was dead was the man of the fire-box and the smoke-guide.

The King said unto the son (it was Krieg-deor, which meaneth "War-beast"): "I am much beholden unto thee, O dear first born, for why will any freeman thus attempt to abuse his freedom? That man knew not liberty, nor its rightful use."

The assembled warriors, thereupon, beating loudly on their shields with their *suerds*, cried: "Hael, Krieg! Hael, Krieg! Thrice hael to the King of the Saxons, him who hath given us liberty!"

Then said the Jew in his spirit, for he saw the trend of matters wholly: "Oh that Messiah had come! Oh that a man might have his justice! Oh that the sword of the Lord were already set upon the earth, and had swept it of unrighteousness! Or if one from

above were come with fire and with hail and with lightning and with thunder, and should wholly devastate the earth. Or give me, O Jehovah, merely that Roman law which I— No, no— What then? Nothing. Nothing? Mine arms? What shall they avail?''

But still, as he pondered, he saw with greater and greater clearness that one lone, single thought filled up these Saxons' minds, and that that thought was blood and bravery. Blood and bravery, bravery and blood! There was no other way to reach their hearts and minds than by the road of bravery and blood.

Now the Jew's whole spirit rebelled at what was working in him, for it thoroughly honored the temple of man's soul and would have saved it touch of hurt or injury. Moreover, the law of his people, said it not: ''Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man''?

So the soul of the Jew was riven, and he knew not what to do. He suffered exceedingly.

At last it seemed to him that it was better he should fight. Why indeed should he forever bear? BEAR? A figure arose in sweet tearful majesty, in whose all-compelling presence the scene around him passed away. Once more he beheld, as though with physical vision, the roaring, hell-cursed multitude just outside the choked up Gate of the Gardens, saw the gleaming soldiers, felt the lash, picked up the contaminating cross, and then—BEAR!

Bear what?

Everything.

But he was flesh and blood!

Bear.

Now the sweet compulsion was jarred into and interrupted. Krieg it was who spoke. ''The people having mentioned their mind,'' said Krieg, with a sound like the grating of rough iron, ''perhaps will now permit their leader to set his own opinion forth. And that opinion is that we should seize these points (for they are good indeed, as some of you know, having cast them into oak trees and so tested them) and that then we should shew this Simon of Cyrene forth, far beyond the marks, and without any payment for his points. For behold, he is not home-born (is he?) but hath singular marks, being dark of visage and eye, and not at all inclined to blood and war— from which we know him without doubt to be unworthy.''

Then said Simon of Cyrene to the King in a voice of exceeding tenderness and pleading, ''I came among you only to be of as excellent service unto you as I could. For I had heard ye were all brave men. Moreover, thou, O Krieg, didst give me a promise at the

marches not only of safe conduct, but also of a hundred rings and of much clear amber—if that my weapons pleased thee. Now ye have found the points of the javelins that they are good. Give me, therefore, that which thou hast said thou wouldst give. Give me the things which are truly mine in accordance with the agreement."

At this the face of the King waxed red, and his brows ran together. "Agreement! What is an agreement? A word, a sound, a breath, a little air that is spoken and gone. Pay no further heed unto it."

"Let be," cried then Krieg-deor to his father. "Let be, and I will stab this craven Jew, so that his soul may rush at once unto Hellia. Then he shall have those rings and the amber which long he hath sought to obtain from us, and to take away that never we should see them more."

At that he dashed with gleaming blade upon the Jew.

But Simon, in the way he had learned from Lampadephorus, avoided him. Catching him by the hand that held the sword, and taking him by the middle of his thigh, he threw him. Lifting up the great man once again, he flung him that his bulky form flew, hurtling, far above the heads of the assembled multitude. Striking against a tree, Krieg-deor fell as silent as any stone.

Drew Simon his two bright blades, for he felt that his days were numbered.

But behold! The soldiers were filled with astonishment, and the fair-haired daughter of the King, even Maerthu (whose name, interpreted, signifieth "glory") rushed out from the ranks of the multitude, and cast herself at Simon's feet. Lifting her hands above her golden hair (which made a shine all round about her, as it were sunlight) she cried to the Jew: "Oh thou art unto me, very strong one, like a harp-song, and like sweet dreaming which cometh the night before battle.

"Ask of my father for me. Give him the gold and the spear-points also (for thou canst easily get more such) and I will be to thee as one of the Valkyrias, go with thee into battle, lead thee and guide thee, protect thee, be to thee ever as an inspiration. Thou art strong and brave, worthy in all ways to be my troth-plight man."

When Krieg observed that his golden-headed daughter, Maerthu, favored the Jew, he became more angry than ever. "Is it the daughter of King Krieg that should go to a merchant and stranger? Let be! And see, I will do to this cheorl that which another hath not been able to accomplish—or if I cannot, then, ye Saxon freemen, leap all at the same time upon him, and so be certain to destroy him."

The golden-haired Maerthu, however, made answer: "If that man meeteth death, then send I mine own free soul to Asgard. Father Woden, I do promise thee."

And Krieg trembled, for he loved his daughter much. Yea, the most of the pleasure which he had in battles was to hear his daughter praise him amid the uproar.

And Drugi-thing, the crafty priest, when he saw that now, in any case, it lay not in his evil hands to do the Jew injury, came forward (though still with ever-shifting eyes) and whispered: "Lo! Are we not every one angry? And can we indeed do well, being so, or speak the thing that Woden, in his wisdom, would approve? Let be, therefore, and, for a time, tarry.

"And let this Simon of Cyrene be unto us not as one married to the King's daughter, but as a sacred guest. Hast thou not promised the man that so it should be? Let him be Seli-Secg, the hero of the hall, for, on this day, he hath done great things.

"And let there be in the hall seli-dream, or feasting and festivity throughout the banquet-chamber, and that on many continuous days.

"And when we have much eaten and long drunken, it may be that Woden shall give us (after his fashion in these matters) a vision wherein he may instruct us how we shall deal with Simon of Cyrene."

CHAPTER XXXVII

No Land Whatever

Said the Jew in his soul, "I know not whether to fear or to feel happiness. For lo, this woman doth love me and will save me if she can, while yet, in the very same time, I see too clearly that the priest is nothing but fraud and deception. He will send me (if only his chance be given) unto Hades."

But the daughter added to the dark whisperings of the priest her clear-spoken syllables, which indeed were like the blessed singing of a bird in summer sunshine. She said, "Dear Father, as the priest saith so am I willing. Let the Jew be the hero of the hall, and let there be seli-dream."

The King said, putting up his bright sword: "It shall be as thou likest."

He gave, therefore, orders, and the huntsmen started for the killing of game, and the cheorls to the cutting up of logs for great fires, and the Jew was taken to his own apartment in the Krieg's seli. In

that place, when he had well eaten, he laid him down and sought to sleep.

But, for a time, his eyes were wide in the darkness. In his soul, he did repent him that ever he had come among these Saxons, seeking to sell the implements of death.

But after he had fallen asleep, there burst upon his dreaming, and so awoke him, an unspeakable tumult and uproar, wherein were intermingled death-groans and screams of pain and triumphant cries. Through the tempest of voices, the slithering and clanging of steel on steel.

Up leapt the Jew. From the wall he tore a stanchion out, then, in the moonlight, beheld both Saxons and Semnones, a struggling host. Farther and farther they struggled off, into the muffling woods and distant marshes till at length the moonlit world about the hall was silent.

Came out from the seli an aged man, wearing a beard like that of Father Time. He appeared to be wholly sightless, and, in his hand, he held a beautiful harp.

Upon a stone took he his seat, underneath an oak-tree, and, singing first of gods above, both Hemdal, the god of battles, and the sword-god, Saxnot, eke of Woden, the Allfather, the mightiest war-god of all of them, he declared that his name was Luggi-dom (or false fame) he who celebrated deeds of blood.

He sang, too, of the great wig-mot, which is to say the battle-rush, of the beautiful bitings of steel on steel, and of steel on bones, of the cries, the cowardice, the bravery, of the wonderful treachery and surprise which old Treulos, he of the one eye, King of all the Semnones, had practiced upon Krieg and his Saxon braves. Then of the rallying of the Saxons, how they had quickly encompassed the King's seli, and so saved it, then how, beating steel on skull, they had driven off old Treulos backward, backward out of the hall-yard, backward, backward, down to the pine forests, backward, backward into the deep marshes, there to be a prey both to snakes and to wolves. "And our chieftain, Krieg, he is Snaka, the Snake, for who is like unto him for wisdom and for artifices?"

Then he sang long of the wondrous merits and virtues of the War-Serpent, that all should bow before it, for that it was very mighty. Its voice was sharp and clear and hissing and very beautiful. Its venom was only for enemies, and not for friends. Let every one beware, then, and be but a friend of the Snake, else was the name of that incautious person but a by-word and a syllable without meaning. Let also the merchants who would come from afar deal justly.

Let them not think to rob the Saxon Krieg, Cuning of all the Saxons, for his wisdom was very great. O who could understand his wisdom or his machinations? Surely not the enemy; no, not they.

And while he was concluding with a sweet, melodious blessing upon King Krieg, behold, back, triumphant, each with a yellow head upon his spear-point, and with great round dripping things beneath his arms, the Saxons returned.

The round things placed they on stakes, and set the stakes up for a fence all about the King's seli, and, while they were busy at this, there came out running Modar-obarmodias, the queen-mother, saying: "Praise Woden, there hath been another fight." (But Maerthu was busy at the great fence, setting up the heads.)

At this, the queen-mother, seeing her young son, Kill-quick, eating of butter upon bread, reproached him, saying: "What! wouldst become a coward? Knowest thou not that butter is not for food, but for a salve,[1] with which to rub the wounds when Woden hath not healed them? Wilt thou be soft, a runner away from enemies? Look up! Thou wilt be a warrior, wilt thou, and stand in the presence of men—thou who eatest medicine? Thou art only a laugh-thing, and wilt be afraid of blood."

And far away there was sound of much thundering.

"A laugh-thing am I not," cried Kill-quick. "See! I am not a coward!"

With his knife he cut a deep gash in his left fore-arm, and the blood spurted, and he went and let it spout in his mother's face, saying: "Am I a laugh-thing? A coward am I not."

But the mother struck him a great blow on the neck, crying: "Go into the seli with Maerthu, and have her burn thee ere thou bleed to death. Maerthu! Where is Maerthu? Not here? Then go thyself and burn it with the burning-iron, as thou hast seen thy father and thy brothers staunch their own wounds these many long days."

The child went into the hall, and Modar-obarmodias, the queen-mother, said to the old blind harper: "He is a fool for to shed his own blood, not that of an enemy—just to show me he not a laugh-thing is, or a coward. Did not I know that?"

But at this she was called by women from the seli. "Come! thy son! he dieth!" But they brought the boy outside, and laid him along the ground.

And the life (which goeth with the blood) had escaped.

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[1] See, *inter alia*, Hoops, "Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde," I Bd., 3 Lieferung, p. 364, article "Butter."

And many there were which ran to the father, even Krieg, bringing him to the place where the dead child lay.

And Modar-obarmodias, mother and queen, told Krieg all that had happened. But Krieg said softly unto her, "Thou hast thought to do wisely. And thanks to all the *godo* that the child was not a fool. He is surely with Woden and Thor, for he died no straw-death."

At this was a rumbling of thunder at a great distance, and the King cried, looking toward the West: " 'Tis thou, O Woden! He is with thee! I have heard."

Then took Krieg with him the priest and a dozen of the bravest of all the warriors, and went out into the forest, even to the graf-stedi. There they buried the child.

But while they were afar, the Jew talked much with many of the commoner people, and inquired precisely as concerning their beliefs and about the stories which they told or sang concerning their own ancestry and the histories of their gods.

In return he related to them from time to time full many a thing about Jehovah, the Creator, whose days had never known beginning and should never know an end. Yet seemed only a few of the people capable of comprehending, even by the time that Krieg returned from the burial.

Which was after a number of days—for he had met, in the deep ways of the forest, a band of enemies—Krieg and his dozen of great warriors—and they gave pursuit, and followed the enemy mightily, and having compassed them about, conquered them and slaughtered them, and left their bodies for the wolves—all saving the heads alone. These they brought back with them—crying as they came in sight of the seli: "Blessed is Woden, the Allfather! He is god of war."

Then, tired as they were, they went to the banquet, which had been a-waiting. Nor stopped they either to sleep or to bathe.

Now the banquet, the seli-ho-getidi, was to be held in the great banquet hall, where the father of Krieg (who bore the name of Gedrinc, which, interpreted, meaneth "carousing"), had feasted long before him, and *his* father (also named "Krieg") before that.

All round this hall was an outside wall, or fence, of timber, with but a single gate therein and a yard of considerable compass lying betwixt wall and hall. And wall and hall were both painted wholly red. Even the hall's roof was dyed with an ochre of crimson. "For that," said Maerthu to Simon of Cyrene, "is the color of blood. We see it very willingly."

And Maerthu, the King's fair daughter, led the Jew into the

hall with her own hand, saying: "Thou art the bravest of all. Thou art like music to me and like blood. I alone shall take thee in to the feast."

She led him, therefore, into the hall.

Then saw the Jew all round about him an enormous apartment, once indeed red, now mostly blackened with smoke, for, in the middle of the room, lay a great stone, whereon an enormous fire blazed (though the weather had grown warmer), and the smoke thereof, running in a thick pillar up to the smoke-hole in the roof, would sometimes waver and return into the room and fill it with stinging darkness.

At the farther extremity of this enormous apartment, was a dais, the "High Seat" (so Maerthu called it) and, close this side thereof, a bench almost as high, which she called the "Second Seat." Round the three other sides of the room was one continuous oaken settle, on which the freemen and their wives did sit, while the churls and their very humble consorts sat, or half lay or squatted, huddled up in highly expectant confusion on the floor.

"Pick thou thy way through the floor-sitters!" cried Maerthu. "Make thou room there, Wood-wise and Tree-cutter, Wood-woman and Fork-beard. Know ye not that I am daughter of the King, and that this man is our guest and one that hath shed much blood?"

Thereat the sitters on the floor burst out angrily, some of them crying one thing, some another. But a man named Plow-holder shouted most fiercely of all: "It is well, is it not, to make room? Let bright home-born people get from under the footsteps of a dark stranger! Aye, it is well. Aye, ye do say wisely!"

But the bright daughter of the King shouted, "Give me thy sword, O Simon, and once for all I will end this fellow." But the cheorl ran, quitting the seli, and the horns sounded bravely, and the hall was over-filled with din, for the King came stalking into it, and the queen-mother, attended both by many heralds with their horns, and also by Drugi-thing, the priest with the shifting eyes.

But when the King and the Queen had taken their places on the dais, and then the bright daughter of Krieg would have led the Jew straightway among them, and would have had him seated by her side, then the priest whispered in the King's ear, and the King frowned. And he cried unto Maerthu, "Let be! Wilt thou take unto thee to husband him that a stranger is, and all of darkness, and while the home-born heroes wait? And who is this Simon of Cyrene, out of Palestine? Is he not a were-wolf? Was he not seen (too early for his happiness) on the very day he came among us,

both by Strike-hard the smith, and by the great priest of Woden, Drugi-thing, there on the Crest of Error?

"It is even so. For the smith and the priest they were mounting up the hill, and, coming on a great white wolf, it ran before them, going over the hill-top. And when they had reached the crest themselves, behold— There was not one wolf over all the snow, but only the black Jew (who was, truly, himself the wolf) he and his sledge. For he had said the magic words, and gone back into the shape of a man. But we know him, what he is. He is no man at all, but a wolf. On a day, he will eat our children up, aye ourselves also."

Said Drugi-thing, the priest: "It is right that we try this man for his evil, before we lift one horn of mead to our lips. Let us therefore give him now his ordeal by fire."

Then uprose Maerthu, controlling her anger, for she knew that all these things were the cunning of the priest. Said she, "Mighty Father, King of all the Saxons, thou hast the power to do what thou wilt. If, then, it be for thy daughter to speak unto thee, and to break her mind within this hall, then, O puissant Father, I would ask of thee that thou have here and now no trial of any one of us, for to see if that one be a werewolf, but that we shall feast devoid of interruption till the Star of Woden come to stand directly over the smoke-hole. For then, as thou knowest, at that very hour, must each and every wolf that is a were, turn back into a wolf, whereby he may be detected and yet an amusement be made for the rest of us also—which is better, surely, than any ordeal, even that by fire."

At this the King cried, "No." But the cheorls and the freemen shouted, "Try nobody now. Wait until the hour. It will be an amusement for us, and we, with our own good hands, will kill the big white wolf that would eat us and our children."

So the King gave way, and the mead came, and all drank deeply, crying: "Hael, King! Hael, Priest! Hael, Strike-hard, the blacksmith, he that maketh the weapons! Hael mostly Krieg, King of the Saxons!"

The wild-boar came, served on a platter of wood, and the deer-meat also, and the meat of the wolf and the horse.

And the mead-horns passed around and yet around again, and still they kept on passing, so that the hall was terribly mead-mad, and then some of the cheorls asked for singing and the music of the blind harper, others that there should be a skin-pulling—for by now the enormous fire on the stone was a mass of living coals.

So War-beast and one of his younger brethren, called Trick-battle, came down from the High Seat by their father, and, taking a long,

strong walrus-hide, from its hook on a stanchion, each seized one end thereof, and then stood opposite his brother, with the great fire quiet between them. Each did seek to pull the other down upon the fire by means of the hide of the walrus.

They pulled so hard that the sweat stood out on their temples, and their drunken eyes seemed like to pop first to the fire.

The hall shrieked, and men and women were happy.

Then gave War-beast a sudden tug, turning at the same time, and placing his shoulder underneath the hide. Trick-battle, then, was almost lost, for his feet went into the fire, but the hide was torn asunder, and so he was saved with only a singeing of his soles.

Then shouted all, "An ox-hide! an ox-hide!"

And the father gave command that the hide of an ox should come.

And with this they pulled and tugged again, both steadily and suddenly, and with many curious feints and strategems, which only the learned in these matters knew.

Trick-battle said unto his brother, "Thy knee burneth!" War-beast looked, and at that the other pulled with all his strength, and brought the War-beast—even Wig-dier, his brother—forward and down into the coals.

And he threw the hide upon his brother, and jumped upon it.

Then filled the hall with deafening uproar, and woundings began, for the jumpings were not permissible, and the freemen drew their swords, taking sides, and all the churls drew sticks, grouping themselves on opposite parts of the building, so that Luggi-dom, the old harper, was fain to play upon his harp and sing to them, while the King and the Priest cried for silence.

Then Wig-dier, the war-beast, was taken without, that his wounds might be dressed with butter. But the people remained and heard the harper, with stern, set faces and gleaming, glassy eyes—for the harper played the Saxon battle-tunes and sang of long combats, in which their people had ruled the day, and in which there had been much blood.

So he continued singing till at length the Priest of Woden, Drugi-thing, whispered to the King, and the King cried out: "Let be, Luggi-dom! And turn thy harp to the Jew, even Simon of Cyrene, that he may play for us." (For he had not known that the Jew could play the harp.)

Then Simon arose, and, taking the harp, toyed for a moment with its strings very softly, just as the night wind sighs among the

needles of the dreaming pines, when God walketh in his northern gardens.

And all the assembly grew silent, for so sweet a melody that hall had never before heard.

And when an inspiration had come unto him, then the Jew, in an eye-set vision, began to improvise as concerning the way of the Jew among other men. But one of the cheorls cried, as he gazed up through the smoke-hole: "See! the priest was mistaken! There is not any were-wolf here among us, for the Star of Woden has long since passed the smoke-hole, and now it must be going downward toward its setting."

The heart of the Jew was very happy—for he thought that his dangers were all gone.

But the blind harper, Luggi-dom, and the great Cuning, Krieg, and likewise Drugi-thing, the priest with the shifting eyes, were whispering together behind him, with their heads turned away from the eyes of the people.

But so full was the Jew's heart that he said within himself, "Behold! I will be brave exceedingly, and will sing to all these people even in the presence of their very King, great Krieg, and of Drugi-thing, the crafty one, and of all the princes of the house. And I will sing of Mt. Zion, and Him whose temple is thereupon, who indeed created the world and all that is in it, and whose days are without number—both without beginning and without end."

As he said within himself, so did he.

And some of the people waxed angry that he sang concerning his own God, but a few were there who hid their eyes and wept. And among the weepers were some of the sons of Craft. On a day remote, these, having met him that was called Christopherus, became Christians and were baptized. And going into many places, they taught that salvation is of the Jews, in especial Jesus, and brought many others also unto Christ, until at length, Jehovah, who long had loved the workers and supported them in fleshly tribulations, reached forth and took them home. But the sons of the sons of Craft still live and love and teach the doctrine of the Lord in Germania.

And Maerthu, the bright daughter of the King, who sate anigh unto Simon, looked up as if upon an angel of the Almighty, and behold, her eyes also were swimming with great tears.

At length came Simon of Cyrene to sing of Jehovah as merciful, as one whose pity was endless, in whom was a hatred of battle, who had declared on his tablets of stone this everlasting law: "Thou shalt not kill."

Started up Maerthu, the bright daughter of the Saxon King, and tore the sweet harp from her troth-plight's fingers, and flung it to the farthest timbers of the room, whereon it brake into discordant pieces. Fiercely: "Fool! is that thy god? Dost thou worship a coward? How have I been deceived, mighty one, and thought thou didst worship sword and blood!"

Thought Simon: "Lost!"

And great cries rang from the banquet hall, and greater from without, and guards ran in, shouting: "The Semnones! The Semnones! They kill, they kill, they kill!"

Simon hallooed above the raging tumult, "See! Am I coward? I will fight among you, and help to victory. Even as I fought for Lampadephorus of old, so fight I now for you."

He thought that so he would get again the German favor, in especial that of the King's daughter.

He brought therefore from under his skirt his two bright swords, and fought once more as dimachærus—even the way his oldtime master, Lampadephorus, had taught him how to do, both in Egypt and in Cyrenaica.

And in the yard of the banquet-hall he slew Semnones without number, and rushing with the Saxons past the outer walls, then down the starlit clearings and into the ways of the forest, slew the retreating enemy, and knew no mercy at all to any thereof.

Once, when the Cuning of the Saxons, even great Krieg, was like to perish at the hands of the chief of the enemy, he—even he, the Jew, priest and prophet of the Most High—came up, succored him and saved.

And the King of the Saxons arose, and, though the Jew had stood beside him to the saving of his life, yet would he not behold that man, but rushed furiously by, blood-drunk, and crazed in his very heart, for that a Jew and a merchant had been of salvation unto him.

That night the battle-loving Saxons secured well-nigh their whole fill of blood. All the late hours they fought, and many fell. And some were seen no more in any guise. For the wolves gathered round about them, or they dropped into the bog. Not till the sun had well arisen did the horns blow, and Krieg, the King of the Saxons, lead back the remnant of his hardy host.

And Maerthu was among the warriors that went back. Under her arms were the heads of many men.

She ran on well before the other warriors, taking her place (with sword held above her sunlit tresses) into the seli door.

The Jew said in spirit, "She is mine, for she saw me a-fighting, and I fought as never man hath fought ere now. She is very beautiful. The Lord bless her and me."

But when he had come anigh the door, she cried: "Thy God is a coward. Get hence. He is not my God, and enter thou shalt not here."

Simon would have pressed upon her and upon the people round about them somewhat of his virtues in the battle, asking if none that were present had seen him in the fight.

Now Krieg was a-minded to listen, but Drugi-thing, the priest, advancing, said: "There is always, puissant monarch, one sure way whereby to tell a wolf which is masquerading as a man. Either some portion of his body's skin is a-wanting, or else there are runes burnt in the skin of his forehead." And he would have lifted back the ringlets of the Jew, but Simon suffered him not.

And the Jew said unto them all, "Ye have had my swords, the two of them, and I your tolerance. Hael and farewell!"

So he departed.

Yet he remained in the confines of the Saxons for many days, knowing not whither to go. Time and time again, he asked for land, whereon he might dig out the humblest living, yet was ever refused.

And he wandered among the Chauci, and the Angrivarii, the Semnones, the Bructeri, the Marsi and the Chatti. And he was turned away at many doors, and at others he entered in, but only on sufferance. Nowhere would they give, or sell, him any land.

Then fared he forth from the marches of the Germans and into far Sarmatia, yet there also would they suffer him to have no land, neither an ell nor an inch. But, instead, they entreated him shamefully, so that he barely escaped with his life. And he came back and wandered in Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhaetia, likewise in the country of the Vindelici. And everywhere said he to all, "Let me, I pray thee, have just a little land. For I have no home. I am a shepherd by birth, and would mind my sheep. I will repay thee abundantly. And thou shalt have good cause to bless the day when I did come among you and first did lift my shepherd's crook up." But they said to him everywhere, "Thou? A Jew! Fah!"

He went then into the Hyperborean regions, yea and farther still. And yet would they nowhere either give him or yet sell unto him any land. Neither spot for home nor yard for sheep gave they unto him or in anywise sold unto him.

Then, at length, he said within himself: "I have wandered long enough in obscure places, and asked enough in vain for land. Am I

not a coward that I go not unto a mighty city? Are not rings and amber in the city, as well as in the country, yea and great gems also, the which a man might hide within his person against that time when he should need them for a quick escape?'' He began to remember how Apodoter, the captain of the Persis, he that had brought unto him rescue from Mastix and from the belly of the Babylonia, how this man had straitly advised him to leave the shepherd life and to be as a merchant.

''Thou a shepherd! Thou live in obscure places!

''What canst thou as shepherd?

''Be a merchant of a great city. Let thy caravans be as the flights of birds, thy ships upon the sea as flocks of eagles.''

So had Apodoter admonished him.

He also remembered the very delectable lust for gold that had grown up in his heart as he labored in the Mines of Cæsar, and again at the house of Avaritius.

Tenfold greater now, because of the increasing opposition made against him, grew his hunger for money and for power and, by these, for safety.

So at last his eyes were opened. All these wanderings in obscure places had been as a school to him. But now the road—*his* road—in life, lay straight before him. The city, the city! Why should he longer fear the Mines when he should have made a friend of Cæsar, the which he should surely do? The people, the moving crowds, the smells, the inspiriting noises, the cosmopolitan contest which at last he saw belonged of nature, therefore of right, unto him, even Simon of Cyrene! Commerce, profit, money—everlasting peace!

BOOK V. A PROMINENT MAN

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Cæsar

On a day of days, Cæsar gave audience—Cæsar, great Lord of all this striving earth.

And they that stood in the Audience-chamber (which was the center of Rome, which, in its turn, was center of the world) were very, very wretched, and very fearful of their lives.

Certain of these on trial!

"My power!" shouted Cæsar thereunto. "Ye hounds! Ye would take it from me—my power, my divinity. Ye would make my godhead into naught. Therefore away to the Mines!"

They that stood before him on their trial were removed from the chamber of audience.

And still others were brought in their stead. These were accused of having conspired against Cæsar, but certain of the witnesses declared that he that had brought the delation had lied.

Said Cæsar, "I will know the full of this matter on another day. Meantime—to the cross!"

And the accused were removed for crucifixion.

Still others were brought who were charged with being Christians.

Said Cæsar unto them, "Are ye indeed such bad people?"

They said, "We are Christians, but Christians are not bad people."

Cried Cæsar, "Ye do confess it unto me that ye are Christians! My godhead, oh my godhead, what is become of my godhead? But I will be gentle with you. Unto the beasts."

Then came one who was charged with stealing a sum from Cæsar's chests. Cæsar said unto him, "Hast thou stolen it?" The man went close up unto him, and gazed him in the eye, and was not shaken. Said he, "Yea, Lord, I have stolen it. And I am sorry, not indeed for this, that I am a thief, but that I have stolen from Cæsar, who is very good to his people, and who is the god of all this universe."

Then grinned Cæsar in the midst of his fatnesses. Shouted he, "By mine own divinity, spoken like a man. No filthy worm to cringe and crawl, even before the Lord of All this Universe, art thou. Here

is a kiss for thee. Give him a quittance, treasure-bearer, for his crime, which is venial, and twice the money he hath stolen.—Is there yet another?"

Another came. And this one, having seen how well the brazen criminal before him had fared, thought to be brazen too. He went up therefore, or ever the charge was read, anigh unto Cæsar, and smiled in his teeth.

"Why grinnest thou?" cried Cæsar in a rage.

"Even because I am charged with having laughed at thee as thou rodest about the streets."

"Didst thou laugh?"

"Yea, I laughed, O Lord of All this World. I laughed and laughed again, and yet again I laughed. And for this I laughed, that thou didst say, 'I am Lord of All this World.'"

"And wast much amused?"

"Greatly amused, O Cæsar."

"Take him out," cried the Lord of All the World, in a voice like a thunderbolt. "Take out the smiling philosopher, and let him smile head downward from a cross.—Now, if there be no more appeals for justice unto me, let us close the day with sweet sacrifice."

An officer asked, "To whom shall we sacrifice?"

"To whom? Askest thou, O officer of this court, 'To whom?'" He took his dagger, and ran upon him that had asked the question, and stabbed him to the heart. "Now may the whole world know that, when Cæsar biddeth a sacrifice be offered, it is a sacrifice unto himself.

"To the temple!—Where is Sarcogenes?"

CHAPTER XXXIX

The Left Hand of God

Now, in the campagna, which compasseth round about the majesty and might of Rome, there were shepherds that watched their flocks, and led them in and out among the multitudes of tombs.

Two of these men were shepherding their sheep in the fields of the Appian Way—Asper and Inhumanus. Asper saith to Inhumanus, "A many great ones lies hereabouts."

"Thou sayest truly, fool. And a many of *them* have been dead a many years."

"Yea, and all of them are fain to be dead a many more years hereafter than yet they have been dead in the past."

"Well said, ruffian. And, now I think of it, what thou hast just spat forth containeth a tid-bit of humor. Thou didst not know that. Come hither, sheep. Come, I will lead thee, Grass-eater. Didst thou think thou knewest more—"

"Who is he that cometh with such enormous strides? Not one of us, not one of old Septicollis."

"A man of energy, I'll be bound."

"Ah, mushroom, it is Parush, a Jew. *I* know him. Canst not fool *me*."

"It is not Parush," quoth the other, "not that man which prayeth in the Forum Boarium, again on all public bridges, yea and in the very Basilica Julia itself. I have seen him on market-days, Parush. Nay it is not he, fool. Wait. I can remember this man's name. It is Alukah. Also a Jew is he, but named Alukah, and a very different, more absorbent kind of Jew than is Parush. Alukah, the horse-leech."

Then, as the wind blew and lifted the night-black locks from the forehead of the striding Jew, Asper crieth out: "Well, by the sufferings in Hades! All Jews look alike. Three letters! Let us stone the fellow. See! Here be good-sized stones."

"Caution! Caution, fool!"

"And so make up for our misconceptions."

"Caution. He looketh not like one that might be stoned easily."

"We twain can do it.—Come hither, sheep, the best of the picking is whither I would guide thee.—He hath heard us, and cometh."

"Nay he goeth on (ye fool not *me*) and heareth not either, for his eyes are for the city, and his ears are with his eyes. He hath ne'er beheld the Mistress of the World afore, who hath enchained him. See, he stumbleth!"

"Yet again!"

And indeed the Jew did not so much as note that he was stumbling, though he stumbled many a time and heavily in that hour. For to Simon of Cyrene this was the acme of his life. That day when the earth did shake and yawn and deliver him up from the bowels of the very Mines was not of a surety so much a day of days as this one. He knew not, truly, that in far gone tertiary time, the waves of the Great Sea had brake upon the limestone mountains even at Cameria. Nor that, in the quaternary epoch, two groups of vast volcanoes had arisen from the waters at each end of the bay, and (God having spoke unto them) they belched forth seas of fire and liquid stone, which slowly did dislodge the waste of waters back into the Great Sea. And then that the Tiber and the Anio, running from

the mountains through the fire-made plain, and also into the sea, channelled out ways and passages and made the Roman Campagna, whereon Rome might sit and to which on a day, a certain Simon of Cyrene—

As he passed a turn in the road, behold! Rome full and splendid before his astonished eyes! Rome! Majestic and marbled she stood on her domineering hills, far above the plebeian landscape, stacked and pillared, tier on tier, temple on temple, palace on palace, basilica on basilica, and down around her base an uneasy mist, or groan-filled smoke, as if she had just arisen from the fires and suffocations of Gehenna.

How the massive buildings jostled each other, standing a-tiptoe, peering like people, the one above the next one's shoulders! What did they look at, all those mighty edifices? The channels of the world's trade. He would see that vision for himself. Let him on.

A stone fell close at his feet, and he looketh round, yet seeth two shepherds merely, pasturing their flocks. Another, and he did not even withdraw his gaze off Rome.

Then there began to float into his nostrils the thick, curious smells of the great city, and the Jew rejoiced much in them, and expanded his great lungs, and exulted like unto a horse eager to run into battle. Such a stirring, of a verity, and tumbling, and confused uprising and insurgence of longings and yearnings, passionate aspirations and feverish ambitions, began to take possession of his soul, that he soon perceived he really had never been in existence before. Was this truly Simon of Cyrene? Was this the simple shepherd of Cyrenaica, of the holy fields round Migdal Eder?

He beheld himself as the favorite of Cæsar, the owner of a brilliant palace (perhaps like that which Lampadephorus himself had had in Rome) the master of innumerable slaves. His ships should fly the seas like troops of swallows, his caravans thread the desert passages like swarms of ants. The world should know of his name and tremble at his power, even where the power and the far-reaching name of Cæsar were not yet known.

Now, as the name of Cæsar came into his thoughts, he began to fear. He was not, by his make, one greatly inclined to trepidation, thus forming in respect, say, unto a man like Trivialis so sharp and astonishing a foil. Yet as he looked at the Mistress of the World (which was, in a manner of speaking, The World) and thought of Ophidion, the favorite of Cæsar, and of Cæsar himself (whose mark was even now upon him) Cæsar, so jealous of his own godhead—

And he, the Jew, a messenger from another god, a God that was one and one only, jealous also of His oneness. What, now, about that?

"Ah, Jehovah," he said in his heart, "I will live for thee and will ever love thee, even as always heretofore I have loved thee and have lived for thee. But thou art very great, I small. And Cæsar, too, is great. And Ophidion is powerful with Cæsar."

Then the man decided once for all, with an iron determination, which never in all the coming years was broke, to get him wealth and power within this city of Rome. "By the fears I have felt," said he, "by the hungers I have endured, by the heat and the cold, the innumerable rejections at doorways, the foul mockeries, the cursings, the stripes, by—yea, by thee thyself, O Adonai, I do swear that I will never testify if I can help it unto the heathen as concerning thee. Let the Nations by their own great thinking find thee out. As for me, I must have a watchfulness over mine own bones."

The cumulus clouds above the mighty city piled and re-piled to incredible heights. Kindling and burning with the inexpressible splendor of the ever-brighter day, they wavered, turned and leaned, and slowly toppled, until at length they deeply dropped into some unfathomable abyss—only, however, to rise again. And again. And yet again and again and again and again. And each time higher, but only to fall more quickly.

There were crumblings of thunder, now and then, among these clouds. Simon believed, for a little space, that he saw a rainbow high-arched above the farther hill—the Palatine.

Well, there was one thing sure. He would specially put a bridle on his tongue in this city. Cool calculation should ever be his guide. He would be thinking all the while precisely as he pleased, but his thoughts would remain unuttered—such, at least, as might do damage to his purse and power. His life, his deeds, his outward aspect and demeanor, he himself, in brief, should be the slave of no emotion. His words should be the dictates of his intellect alone.

"High o'er all the world
The cross itself shall rise!"

The words were sweetly sung by one that was coming up behind Simon.

Simon, therefore, turned, and, seeing that the man was of fair demeanor, said unto him: "Brother" (for he was now a-minded to fellowship all, and to be, in a way, like unto all).

But the man said, "Art not thou Simon of Cyrene?"

"Yea," said Simon, "I am he."

"I knew thee," said the fellow, "by thy stature and thy mould (for I have heard of thee) and eke by the word which is on thy forehead, and which thou didst very well come by, and which thou doest well indeed to try to conceal—but canst not."

And he marched, with a snap of his fingers, into the Appian Way, and so toward Rome, leaving Simon by himself.

But Simon said softly, "I will not so much as enter the city by the gate whereby thou enterest."

He fetched a compass round that portion of the walls, coming in time to the gate called "Esquiline." There he quickened his pace, for the roar of the city grew ever stronger in his ears, and drew him more and more. And he beheld a row of crosses. Some of the men that were nailed thereon were dead. Some were corrupted. Others were fresh nailed up, and some of these screamed, some laughed, some prayed, some cursed and cursed again. Having obtained permission of them that watched, he took bread and wine, and gave it to the sufferers.

A band of soldiers appeared in the gateway, and were coming out of it. In the midst thereof were many condemned. One of these did shout, weeping, to a man on a cross: "Happy art thou, O Juventus Morens, for thou art dying. But we go to the Mines of the Wretched."

Thought Simon, "Me, however, I have said ye shall not take; for I will get me power, gold."

He girded him tight up, and listening again to the music of the strange-smelling vortex, Rome, dived into that million-peopled maelstrom.

A swan, bred on the hot, arid sands of a desert, had, at length, after numerous wanderings among dry rocks, got into water.

He mingled at once, as well as such a man could mingle, with a surging Roman crowd that went—he knew not whither. He shouted with the rest of them, laughed with the rest of them. There came into his wild, ecstatic heart, again and yet again, even a faint, far hope of recovering Amahnah, Amahnah as she had been and the children as they ought to be (Jewish and unchristian), here in this whirlpool of a Rome, whereinto all sublunary things did later or sooner ingurgitate.

And Simon went with the crowd by many a winding street unto a certain amphitheatre, wherein, as it seemed, the games had already begun, for, without, into many a wide *carruca,* the bodies of the dead were being grappled up by strong hooks.

Simon said to one of the Romans that were going within, "What are these that are killed?"

The man: "These are some that have sinned against Cæsar. For behold there are games today in honor of the Emperor's genius. But Cæsar hath not arrived."

And Simon went not in, but mingled with another crowd, and went round past the Circus Maximus, and the houses of gamblers and the cells of prostitutes, and many another place of wild amusement in that city. Then by a slave market, and the Forum Boarium, where cattle were sold, and, after a little, as he drew nigh the Palatine, he heard the shouting of a distant multitude: "Cæsar! Hail Cæsar!" And the crowd wherewith he moved, stopped and shouted in return: "Cæsar! Hail Cæsar!"

Behold, Cæsar came. And Simon saw him, saw him in all his fatnesses and swollen crudenesses. And the crowd wherewith he went, shouted in an ecstasy: "Hail Cæsar! Way for Cæsar! Make way for Cæsar!" It divided in the middle to make clean road and passage for the Lord of All this World, still crying continually: "Hail Cæsar, Lord of death and life! We bow to thee, Cæsar! We worship also thine images, thy genius! Thou art Lord of all that is."

And many got upon their knees, and others (which wished specially for favors) fell down upon their faces flat, and did grovel.

Cæsar grinned in the midst of all his flesh, and cried in a kind of pleasurable swoon: "My people, ye do worship me: ye acknowledge my godhead."

Then he saw Simon of Cyrene.

Long and in earnest he looked at that man, so that the knees of the Jew became water. Turned His Majesty unto one that Simon had not till then noticed, one sitting in the chariot beside Cæsar, one with no more flesh on his bones than is on a skeleton, and whose peaked skull was bald and his face like parchment, only full of the wrinkles of a million years. And both his eyes were like gloring shadows. And Simon believed that he heard the one word, "dimachærus," turn out of Cæsar's lips. The shadowy eyes moved full upon Simon, and the lips spread palely and yellowly and spake to Cæsar. But the words they uttered reached not Simon.

Said Simon unto one that stood beside him, "Who is he that rideth on the seat beside Cæsar?"

"That?" said the man. "That is Thanatos, or Death. Behold he hath heard thee!"

And Thanatos drew up the hood of his pallium round about his head, and drew his face deep within it. And his face went into the

shadow of the hood until, as it seemed, there was no face at all within the hood, or flesh or any bone, but a mere empty nothingness.

And the crowd followed after Cæsar and his companion, Thanatos. But Simon went his own way.

He came, in a certain hour, to the Roman Forum, center of trade of all this world. There he saw that, even on this holiday, a many still lingered round about.

Saith he to a senator passing, "Tell me, I pray thee, who are the greatest of all that trade and barter here."

Saith the senator, "I cannot tell thee, for I know not."

Again Simon, of a knight: "Who, I pray thee, is the greatest of all that trade and barter here?"

Saith the knight, "Truly, I know, but dare not tell. Shall I offend the others who are great?"

Then he asked of a lawyer and again of a doctor, eke of a sophist also. But each of these answered, "Now that is a question I have never heard before," and so passed on.

Came Simon to a boy of the streets, one much deformed and dressed in dusty rags. "Tell me, I do pray thee, who are the greatest of all that trade and barter in this place, for to him I would speak." The boy held out one hand, palm up, and drew therein with a straight forefinger a little circle.

Simon therefore laid a penny in the hand, and asked once more.

Said the boy, "Come with me. Stand and observe. Seest thou not that all those traders are circled into larger or smaller groups? Now, one of the groups is larger, yea very much larger, than all the rest combined. In the center of that group are Nummus and Praesens Pecunia. They therefore are those who are greatest of all that trade in the Forum."

Simon looked and saw that this was true, for a many that seemed high prosperous went up before these men like criminals before a judge, pleading, begging, supplicating, even praying. Those whose favors were granted, bowed and departed with many smiles. But those whose favors were denied, passed from the Forum like men condemned to death.

Simon: "What art thou called?"

"Intelligens, son to Visio and Paupertas, but wholly unlike either. I dwell in the Street of the Humble. Vale." He was gone.

Simon waited about till the crowds dispersed, and Nummus (Coin) and Praesens Pecunia (Cash) were about to step within their common litter. Then advanced he before them, saying: "Lords, a

stranger, one who would learn of you the ways of business and trade. An apprenticeship perhaps, if it be your will—"

Nummus and Praesens Pecunia looked upon the man, feeling for him tender, mysterious friendship. Therefore said they, "Thou art a great man, but an over humble."

Said Simon, "I have known misfortune." He waited while the masters of the Forum studied him yet further.

At length said Nummus, "We do know thee not: it is settled."

But Praesens Pecunia was not quite so hard. Said he, "Thou wouldst not, I am sure, be content with any small, simple clerkship in our argentaria. Yonder is the sign of our place, in the great Basilica's side—NUMMUS AND PRAESENS PECUNIA, ARGENTARII. All the world trembles when it hears— But—to a test of thee. I have it. We are not, at present, in high favor with our sovereign [whispering] Cæsar. Art thou meant for man of business, thou'lt find a way—a method whereby to get us a concession, secure again for us the favor of Cæsar. Enough. Farewell."

But Simon laid strong hands upon the litter, that the slaves could not on with it, so that Nummus and Praesens Pecunia marvelled. And even as Jacob of old would not let the angel go till that he had blessed the Jew, so, here also, Simon of Cyrene would not suffer the litter of Nummus and Praesens Pecunia to proceed from the Forum, till he had gotten a promise from their lips.

"And ye—if I get you the favor out of Cæsar, will ye then take me as your partner into your argentaria?"

"Yea, at a third of the value of the business—for we must have again the countenance of Cæsar—the which we have lately lost.—But that thou canst not do for us, else we could do it for ourselves."

Simon let them go, both Nummus and Praesens Pecunia, for his head was whirling to inventive thought.

He ran about the Forum like a distracted person.

Then perceived he that the multitudes were returning from the games. Thought he: "Now Cæsar will be got back home, I will see what I can do."

He therefore went to the Palatine, and up to Cæsar's domus. There the way was blocked by a giant, which said his name was "Obstans," and which guarded the portal of the palace. A mighty spear held he in his hand, the which a common man could hardly lift up from the ground.

Now Simon took the giant, and bent him to the earth, and bound him foot and hand to his own spear, and flung him across his shoulder,

and so carried him, fast, before high Cæsar. For he thought, "Cæsar will have to give me attention, so."

And Cæsar, puffing and purpling, was shouting unto a many that timidly stood round about him: "My power! Oh my power! Ye would take it from me. Brambles and dogs! I have made you all companions, and yet ye would take my power away. See! The very argentarii refuse to fill my coffers more, and the people withhold from me further taxes. What shall little Cæsar do, he that is believed to rule the winds encompassing the earth? Shall he spit money? Either bankers or people—nowhere else. And the people are with the soldiers. And ye with all of them! Ah damned 'ye'! Oh I am woe, I am woe."

So he buried his face in his fat hands, and shook the mountains of his corpulency.

He looked again at his companions, asking in a small, piping voice: "Have I done you wrong, good sirs? If so, admonish me. Cæsar is ever willing to learn of his friends whenever he hath done wrong. Hath he levied too great taxes? Do the people refuse to pay further? Must he cut the court expenses? Come hither, sirrah. Thou answerest not me. Then I have wronged thee not.—Throw him to the lions. Away! No mercy! I say, 'no mercy,' and I yet am Cæsar. Him also—him also throw. My people I fear in the multitude, not by scores or dozens. No, no: to the lions! None of all these fit to be gladiators—even today at the games there were none. So—"

Through the tail of his eye he caught one glimpse of Simon, holding the giant over his shoulder, bounden tight to his own great spear.

Ceasing to speak, Cæsar turned slowly round.

With ever-widening eyes gazed he on Simon.

"By mine own divinity!" As happy he looked as a sweet child. "Thanatos! Art thou here, Thanatos? Look! What is thy name? Art the sort of gladiator I long have sought. Wilt not die for—Who? Simon of Cyrene? Well enough. Long ago heard I concerning thee by the pen of Lampadephorus. And they that brought the letters unto me, there was fraud in them both. Them therefore I executed. I saw thee also upon the street this day. Gods! Dimachærus! Wilt not die for me? Fighter—both hands! I love thee."

Then cast Simon of Cyrene the giant hurtling away. And standing at a little remove from the Great Ideal Sinner, the Glutton of Blood, he said to him: "I fear thou dost not wholly understand me, O Cæsar."

Cæsar frowned. But Simon quaked not. "There was once," said he, "a mouse which assisted a lion."

Then Cæsar smiled.

"Give me thy countenance, O Cæsar, thy beneficent *patrocinium,* to be a man of business in thy name, and under thy protection, and I will hand over unto thee on the very morrow ten millions of sestertia. For I, unlike thy people, am not ungrateful. Believe me, O Cæsar, I am not ungrateful at all."

"Hast thou money, man?"

"None."

Then laid back Cæsar his fat head, and placing his pulpy hands upon his swollen stomach, laughed in intolerable silence. He straightened forth, and roared.

"Sirrah! Sirrah!" It was like the voice of a devil from the throat of a hippopotamus. "Thou art insane. How canst thou bring me, fool, a fabulous treasure, seeing thou hast no money?"

"That, O Cæsar, is the thing I must know. Shall Cæsar, from his tribunal, descend to talk of business, of pennies? Shall not his people, rather, raise for him whatsoever thing he needeth, asking but his countenance alone?"

Cæsar smiled a sweet, fatuous smile. After arising, he said: "Walk with me. To the stables. The rest of you follow at some distance."

He took the Jew and led him to a place where one was painting the hoofs of horses, and another was gathering up the dung of Cæsar's favorite steed into a silver basket. Cæsar said to Simon—

"Thou mayest speak now."

Saw Simon that he durst go no further with his secrecy. Said he, "Who is there can keep anything from thine ears, O Cæsar? My plan was this. I had truly nothing at all. But Nummus and Praesens Pecunia did require (as I chanced to learn) for high success thine imperial countenance. Thou, upon the other hand, didst truly need the millions thy people would not further surrender up unto thee, being ungrateful to thee that thou art Cæsar. Here come in I, saying to the bankers: 'Nummus and Praesens Pecunia, here is for thee Cæsar's countenance.' Then unto thee, Cæsar: 'Cæsar, Lord of all This World, behold thy coins on which thine image rests, and which thy people would not yield up unto thee, being ungrateful; but now they are thine again."

"And *thou!*" whispered Cæsar. "Where cometh in thy profit? Thinkest thou I am simple?"

"Nummus and Praesens Pecunia have promised me," said Simon, "if I do bring to them thy countenance, thy fast and durable countenance in their work and trade, that then they will surrender unto

me, as a pure gift, a third part in their business. And thinkest thou, O Cæsar, that I, once thou hast made me great—"

"It is enough. Let me think. Thou art— Yes, thou wouldst ever be grateful. Let me think. I could always get money from thee when I would. Thou wouldst ever have it, then. Remarkable. Thou art a remarkable— Thou hast a great head for business. So thou seekest to be a money-maker! Wouldst not die for me, rather, upon the sand?"

"See, O Cæsar, I have no quality as dimachærus at all, being only a simple shepherd that now would change his occupation into that of a man of business and trade."

"By Hercules, Simon of Cyrene, if thou canst change to that then thou canst change to yet a better also—a dimachærus. A most remarkable head for business, all the same. I have half a mind— By all the pains of the world, had thy plan occurred to me, Cæsar, I believe I should have adopted it. But no: it is thine. Troops!"

Troops came, a many of them, and Cæsar gave them charge that they should take the Jew into the school of a certain lanista, Sanguinarius, who should render the Jew instruction how he might prepare to die for Cæsar on the bloody sand.

CHAPTER XL

The Man Who Could Not Fail

As Cæsar ordered, so it was done.

And Sanguinarius was a favorite of Cæsar. Yet would Simon of Cyrene not learn of him (already he had learned of Lampadephorus in better ways) and he pretended to be ignorant and wholly unable to master the use of swords.

Then, on a day, when Sanguinarius, seeing that Simon would not learn, and dreading the judgment of Cæsar, when that he should find the Jew had made no progress, went up—this filthy giant—unto Simon, and gave him foul words, and saith unto him: "See! there lie two pointless swords. Take thou them up, and fight as dimachærus, even in the way I have shown thee, else will I master thee and kill thee, yea with this very sword which I hold and which hath a point. Fight."

But Simon ran unto a statue (one of those which stood within the schola, file on file) a statue of Mercury. And he ripped it from its great base, and swinging it round his shoulders, cried: "Aggressor am not I, yet tempt me not."

And Sanguinarius and a many of the other gladiators which were there, at bloody training, ran straight at the Jew.

And he beat them small as the dust before the wind.

And he killed Sanguinarius, both him and many others of the mighty gladiators—Furor, Strongyllion, Clarus, Preclarus, Celeber, and Celebratus. But Sanguinarius was the chief lanista and supervisor of the school.

And Simon's heart was as wax, for he saw he had killed many favorites of Cæsar.

Yet thought he, "Who is this Cæsar that I should fear him?"

So he ran straightway to the house upon the Palatine. And they which stood at guard before the door made way, remembering the fate of Obstans. And the Jew rushed up to Cæsar, crying: "I have killed thy favorite, Sanguinarius, also Furor, Strongyllion, Clarus, Preclarus, Celeber and Celebratus, eke many another gladiator also. For these, they would have killed me, inasmuch as I could not learn to use the sword. And being set upon, I did kill them. Even with the statue of great Mercury, which stood within the hall, killed I them! O mighty Cæsar! Mercy!"

Then said Cæsar, softly: "Thou killedst Sanguinarius! Sanguinarius dead! Was ever anyone that could kill Sanguinarius? Statue of Mercury? What sayest thou? Mercury? That statue—I remember—"

Simon answered him and said, "Even as I have declared to thee, O Cæsar, so it was done."

And Cæsar adjudged him, saying: "I love thee for thy might, but hate thee for the things thou hast done therewith. Get thee out of here. Let me not see thee more. Thy case I take under advisement."

Now Simon beheld that he had received a kind of pardon, but only for this that he had been bloodier than Sanguinarius. Moreover, he had no patrocinium either for Nummus or for Praesens Pecunia, or any money or advantage for himself. He therefore gat him not upon the Forum, but into the lower streets and passages of the city. Turning a corner, he came straightforth on a prophecy—a great procession of wagons, each with a cage of Numidian lions, or it might be Hyrcanian tigers, leopards from Pontus, or hippopotami from Egypt. He sank within a doorway, and the bellowing symbols of Cæsar's bloodlust went on their way to the great vivarium (never to be wholly filled) beneath the amphitheatre.

What a pleasure unto Cæsar!

And every day or two, as he had known, a similar procession

moved from the Tiber, of beasts that had come from the seaport, Ostia, thither out of savage portions of the earth—unto the center of this whole world's civilization.

"Cæsar, thou hast a glorious world! It is thine."

The feeling of a stranger in a strange land came over Simon of Cyrene. Yet no whit stranger was he here in Rome, thought he, than he had felt himself to be, long, long before, in the fields of Bethlehem and Migdal Eder. How then was that? Had he, Simon, never had a home? God's priest—no home! What a world for priest of God! Christ also, he had not—

"It is thy world, O Cæsar! It is not thy world, O priest of God."

He gained the mouth of a street between long, low houses which crowded round about the river front. And he went up upon the bank of the Tiber.

Thence he gazed down at the dun-colored stream. Sombre and silent the river moved on, in its ordained way to the mighty ocean.

"It is thy world, O Cæsar."

The noise of the howling beasts had become a distant roar, like that of a wind which is gone but still groaneth.

"It is thy world, O Cæsar." The river looked cool and inviting, filled with deep forgetfulness of the fever which men call life. A single plunge— "Thy world!" He laughed to think how his own mere, insignificant will could defeat the will of Jehovah, could, at the same very stroke, drown that insignificant, yet all-defeating, will. Aloud cried he, "I will do it. I will defeat the very God of all this universe."

"But not of us," cried voices.

And he turned, and beheld approaching even the forms of Nummus and Praesens Pecunia.

"Foolish fellow!" cried they, "when we have so much of pleasure for thee yet. Nay, speak not. We have heard, heard all—both as concerning thee and thy Jehovah and also as concerning Cæsar and thee. But that was a splendid scheme of thine, and not the product of any foolish head. Not thou, but Cæsar—Cæsar was the foolish man.

"Come, we will help thee. Thou art of our kind. A bag across the shoulder—out among the peasants of the Campagna. They need many things. They will make thee prosperous. Come. They know not how to buy. Come. Thou canst learn the way of trading. Come. Away! Come. A bag! Come. Prosperity! Come."

Therefore, see, upon a day, Simon of Cyrene, priest to the Lord

of all This Universe, doing His will amid the peasants of the Campagna, with a bag across the shoulders, flitting here, flitting there.

And his steps were not confined to the near and soft Champaigns of Greatest Ease. He set a stout heart to the rugged path over the distant Hills of Difficulty, and on across the volcanic seas of Sheer Exhaustion, went down into the Valley of Despair and drank of its bitter waters, and on and on, until he had passed over the ridge, incredibly remote, which divides Failure from Success.

But ever with varying fortunes he plodded.

And he failed again.

And then he gathered dust, and cast it on his head, and cursed the day on which he was born, and lay down and grovelled, and arose and went again on his conquering way.

Many a passerby believed that the man was poor in spirit. But lo, his heart was as an all-consuming flame.

Way for God's priest!

He learned to read the masks and minds of men. The comic mask, the tragic mask, the mask of infidelity, of treason, of pity, of friendship, lechery, scholarship, high thought, and pure trust—he learned to read, to know them all. The souls of men stood forth naked and alone in the presence of him, Simon of Cyrene.

A simple bagman, selling combs and gewgaws!

He dreamed at night (not only in the day) of scales and bales, the loading and discharging of unimagined quantities of goods: grain and wine, ivory and frankincense, weapons and horses, furs and fabrics. He had fleets of many-oared ships, caravans of Bactrian camels and dromedaries of Anatolia. He almost wore his fingers out, even in his sleep, counting profits.

Then, awaking, he would swallow a crust of bread, shoulder his pedlar's bag, and be off to far-away spots.

At length, for fear of arousing people's suspicions, he entered no farther than their doors, unless specially invited so to do. He had had experiences.

"Combs and dolls! Trinkets and gewgaws! Combs and dolls! Trinkets and gewgaws!"

Gay and light must the wares have seemed to Simon's purchasers, but heavy and black unto the Jew, heavy and black on endless, footsore, dusty days. Yet ever and again he beheld with a vivid and too sharp inner eye, the Mines, the lions, the endless files of crosses, and kept steadily on. Night after night he plodded, under the prophetic constellations, day after day sought market for his simple wares. A rough enough life he led, too, knocking about the country at all sea-

sons, at midnight and at sunrise, in torturing heat or spiteful hail, or intolerant blast that blew his boxes all about the road: sleeping sometimes in thief-infested inns, holding the door against robbers, sharing at times the bed of a slave, or, somewhat better, the fold of a sheep, or, somewhat worse, the stalls of cattle and the styes of hogs—this Simon of Cyrene and of Calvary, the cross-bearer of Christ. He was doing well if he got back into Rome for the Sabbath. Sometimes he was doing remarkably well to get back home at all. The world was against him on the right hand and on the left. The only persons that ever would walk beside him were Labor, Sorrow and Care. Oh yes! Nummus and Praesens Pecunia were always glad to see him back in Rome. Now and then they had embraces for him.

There began, about this time, a strange dissension in Simon's emotional make-up. His old outspoken and strongly aggressive nature was continually quarreling with his second nature, that of shrewdness and sly caution. He was one moment frankly denunciatory and, the next, subtly apologetic. There came, at length, to be two kinds of writhing demons of emotion within him—the conciliatory and the pugnacious.

Sometimes, when he was alone, these devils of contrary disposition struggled with each other during long hours for the mastery over him. Anon the one, anon the other, prevailed. And again, they would struggle, both of them, in vain; for, at the close of the fight, he would (as if moved by an inexplicable power which came upon him from without) perform the bidding of neither of these twain portions of his soul, but carry out some plan of which, thitherto, he had been hardly conscious at all. Or, the outward power would join itself to one or the other of the inward two, and behold—an incontestable (but not enduring) victory!

He was a great reasoner in his way, about this time of his life, but sometimes he had no head at all for argument, only a blunt sense, an erratic impulse, a blundering sort of instinct, which, ofttimes, led him, or drew him, or incontinently and most imperiously dragged him, spite of himself, to speak concerning matters which he had rather have kept concealed, caused him to give some deep offense where he had rather by far have practiced supplication only—thus forever keeping him a man apart, howsoever much he might desire and strive to be lost in the general multitude, to commingle with and become a homogeneous and indistinguishable portion of it. It is a terrible thing for any man to be taught the absolute truth about himself, to be shown what he really is, and many a personage in Italy was shown by Simon of Cyrene, in those untutored outbursts, the deeps of his

own bad heart, as a shimmering wave of heat lightning in the night reveals with startling distinctness thitherto unsuspected gulfs within the far deeps of a distant cloud. Ah, Simon of Cyrene, whether thou didst endeavor to reason, or whether, before thou spakest, thou hadst emotional turmoils deep within thee, in either of these cases, thou wouldst sometimes speak—the truth. Even as the prophets of old, so spakest thou, and, like them, thou sufferedst in consequence of the speaking.

Spite of his blundering and forthright blurting out, there came to Simon, ofttimes, as we have said before, floods of prosperity, when it seemed that now at last his worldly welfare was adequately, securely, and perpetually confirmed. Yet, ever, at the very crest, appeared some kind of crisis, or turn, a great reversal, a suction, an undertow, an exceedingly subtle, but apparently foreordained and wholly irresistible ebbing—and alas then for God's priest. Ophidion, as Simon knew, was often responsible for these changes. Ophidion, the friend of the Emperor. Yet, in his heart, Cæsar had also a place for the Jew. Simon knew that. He counted on it. There would come a day—

Then again he sometimes thought that, in a spot off and away in infinite space, there must be some great, unpitying power, an omnipotent and evil intelligence, laughing heedlessly at all things Simonian, all things Jewish, all things human, or mundane, or even anywhere at all existent.

Yet ever he kept at work; hard at work, hard at work. Dreams set off a little to one side again! Money to be made once more. Money, money, money. Money everywhere! He saw money on each bush and bramble, in the trees, in the rocks of the hills and the leaves of the forest, on the sheeps' backs, all over the Campagna, down in the subpelagian deeps of the city, then out over Italy again, and all the waiting world!

Often when nearly a risen man once more, some enemy of his from Spain or Gaul, or Germany, or far Cyrenaica, or Egypt, would hinder his plans, or totally block them. And all that was in his heart at times like these, may no other man know.

This much, however, we may take as settled for certain: Simon of Cyrene (even more than when he was in the Mines) became almost a maniac for everything that dazzles, or blazes, or glitters, or glares, or shines, or sparkles, or twinkles. And he lusted for the touch of silken garments, the feel of polished gems, the odors of lily or rose, of frankincense, nard, musk. The music of lutes and flutes he longed for, panting; and joyous, triumphant song. He was well-nigh crazed

for high magnificence, irresistible power. Ah Cæsar, have a care! There is out in the Campagna a beggar (or, much the same, a bagman) who will not always carry boxes in a bag.

Now the pedlar-king, whenever he found it possible, made back into the city on every Sabbath eve, the lonesome city, which drew him more and more with a terrible fascination, not merely as a place to hail from, but as a nest, a solemn and steady abiding place, a home, a place where unlimited money was, also. If only a strong man could get strong hands upon that money, hands of righteousness of course!

By little and little, his trade was more and more within the city. In the change he was greatly aided by laws enacted at the cruel suggestion of Ophidion. It pleased God to afflict His servant in this way and so to drive him into Rome, to make him there a fixture and a stone of knowing. Might any one (at length) imagine that, in Rome, there could be no Simon of Cyrene?

He plied in the streets as porter, but it suited him not. And yet he must live by some disgraceful occupation, for ever the hand of Ophidion went forth to afflict him. Peddling, garbage-picking, shopkeeping in the Trans-Tiber, or else in the borders of the dark Subura, money-lending—oh, very well! He opened a tiny shop in a place where many people came and went. He rose again. He got him a bigger shop. He lent much moneys even on the Roman Forum. From many an old dust-heap he gathered gold unstintedly, and out of cold ashes he made hot fires.

He had now his own bankers, at home and abroad, his own shippers, ship-captains, money-changers, commissioners, tasters, contractors, buyers, builders, warehouse managers and inspectors, caravan-leaders, camel breeders, dock-masters, granary superintendents, and quarry- and mine-masters. In addition he indirectly set to useful employment many multitudes of lesser men. His caravans wound from Egypt to the Valley of the Euphrates, and on to the Walls of China and the Infinite Ocean. And there came to Rome continually abundant treasures which were his: tin from Cornwall, amber out of Saxony, the linen and the wool of Phœnicia and the purple apparel of Sidon, yea and silver bars out of Gades and gold from the Mines of the Wretched, which are in unforgotten Spain.

Some cursed him privily, others reviled him openly. He was feared by all but one or two—among the exceptions, Seneca.

He became so important at length that the drawers of graffiti (those cruel caricatures upon the many house- and garden-walls of Rome) began to show him up (with his name attached) in the center

of an enormous spider-web. There he sat, red-eyed and watchful, features (which were more like those of Alukah than his own) distorted in lust for gain, full-bodied, ready at a moment's notice to pull the threads which ran to suffering flies—Egyptians, Spaniards, Germans, Gauls, and so on. Again he was shown worshipping a golden calf. Beneath the picture: "Simon of Cyrene. He hath never quit it."

Yet again he was pictorially united with Cæsar himself, the Ruler of All This World, and A Man Most Jealous of His Absolute Power. There sate Cæsar on his lofty throne, while, down before him in the dust, Simon of Cyrene, a-grovelling, was handing up a bag entitled "Pennies of the Poor." Near by, a disconsolate woman and her children wept wretchedly. Sometimes he himself was shown upon the throne, while Cæsar, in the guise of a beggar, grovelled before HIM, Simon. This was the picture which Simon of Cyrene dreaded most. It might have consequences.

It did, in fact, have consequences, it or something else, or many things combined. Who knows? The Jew was ruined. He went and looked at the Tiber again, and again came Nummus and Praesens Pecunia and talked with him, and rescued him, and said unto him: "Why goest thou not into the Trans-Tiber? It is there thou belongest, there with thy people. Keep thou to thyself."

So into the Trans-Tiber he went (this Simon of the ever-returning energies) into the Trans-Tiber, that earliest of the absolute ghettos which the world has known. After all, he was an outcast, a waif, a straw upon Life's current. At least, he should be among his own people, in the ghetto, and should always be on hand of Sabbath eves. Anyway, what difference which way he went, or where he lived?

All possible difference, O Simon of Cyrene. The Lord hath need of thee in Rome, and will keep thee there, and hew thee yet a little further to His liking. He hath His own plans and purposes, He that neither slumbers nor sleeps.

So, into the ghetto, where the streets were more like damp, dark and noisome caverns than any thoroughfares of men should be—caverns long drawn out and interlacing intricately and interminably. Labor, Sorrow, and Care were still beside that Simon of Cyrene in those caverns, and Pestilence also, and Hopelessness and Melancholy grievous to be borne. Here were poverty-stricken weavers, poverty-stricken tent-makers, poverty-stricken dealers in purples, butchers, tavern-keepers, dealers in keys and locks at second hand, even poets and men of letters (who are always and everywhere deeply stricken and in poverty) as well as preachers, lawyers and

theologians. Above all, here were Alukah, the Horse-leech, and Parush, the formalist, Keseel, the stupid one, Na-aph, the adulterer, and Gannab, the thief. And Simon hated these for what they were, yet loved them mightly also, for that they were sons of Abraham, and, by the blood, his brethren.

After a little struggle to carry on business in the ghetto only, he went forth again, of certain days, to the Gentile portion of the city. With a little frame for fruits about neck and shoulders, and a jingling bell in right hand, he hawked about the streets and alleys of the Viminal Hill, the Vicus Sceleratus, eke the dark and dangerous passages of the Subura. And each and every of the man's competitors would sell but a single kind of fruit, crying: "Apricots, apricots!" Or, as it might be, "Peaches, Peaches!" But Simon made an innovation, loading up with different varieties of fruits, and then shouting: "Apricots, peaches, nectarines, strawberries, gooseberries, currants and raspberries! Plums, cherries, pears, citrons, oranges, apples, olives, grapes, figs, melons, lemons, and every other sort of fruit that is known in Cæsar's dominions."

The people laughed and scoffed and crowded clamorously about him, while all the other hucksters were silently ignored. And lo and behold! the people discovered that the cries of the Jew were true, that he had each kind of fruit which there was in the whole confines of Cæsar. And they bought of the fruits freely, merely because they were tickled, and they paid good prices, even for the same unreason. Then, when the other hucksters and hawksters had played at the same little trick and it began to grow old and common, behold! this inventive Simon of Cyrene had got for himself some other device.

On a day, as he went along, crying: "Any old rags or bones?—Rags, bones, bottles, or bits of unwritten parchment?" he beheld, suddenly, in the borders of the Subura, a mighty and beautiful house. Standing before the house, who but Neomathes? Now, Neomathes endeavored not to know the humble Jew. But Simon, asking him whose the house was, found that the place had pertained unto Lampadephorus—that noble and learned Greek, who, much declining in circumstances, had become a simple servant unto Cæsar, and, finally, perished.

Said Simon in his soul, "O Lampadephorus, my teacher! I will live within thy mansion on a day! This much I promise thee, O Lampadephorus, my dear teacher!"

And he went on (for Neomathes had disappeared) crying: "Rags? Any old rags? Rags, bones? Any yellow rags?" For behold, the

man was buying rags of every color, but he called for yellow rags alone, simply in order that people might ask (as they did) "What is the special value of a yellow rag?" And thus he got their rags of whatsoever size or shape or color—and came thereby a trifle nearer to the ownership of his old master's house.

On a day, he was called to the palace of Seneca, the moral philosopher, who was first very kind to him, then interrogated him closely concerning the moral teachings of the Jews.

And Seneca sent him away as were he a king, and Simon was greatly heartened by this, that he had a friend.

And the Jew regarded neither cold nor hunger, nor nakedness nor peril nor sword, but sought out gold, and the power that is with gold, interminably, longing especially for the house of Lampadephorus. Whenever a person offended him, however deeply, he managed to shuffle the matter aside and pass on to other things. But the man who mocked him, him and his fathers (even as Trivialis oft had done) and the rites of his religion, that man he could never forgive. And he was ever seeking to come up with that man, yet seldom finding him.

Ever he slept in the ghetto, and after a time Ophidion caused a law to be enacted whereby he must so sleep. Yet, here in the dense corporeal gloom of the right bank of the river, life had many a compensation for the Jew. No drunken husband ever came into this quarter of the city to beat his wife and little ones to death. The frequent divorces of left-bank society were spoken of by these mothers in Israel only with wondering and awe. Whenever a sorrow befell in any Jewish family, it was felt in the bosom of all of them, was multiplied ten thousand fold and shared with a holy tenderness. Even Alukah was known to give to secret charities. Amid the mere physical gloom of the Trans-Tiber, in fact, the domestic and spiritual life of the children of Abraham shone like a great binary star.

So, for a time, our Simon of Cyrene continued to live in the ghetto, not in a pleasant apartment truly, but in a cramped and noisome room—this man of volcanic passions and earth-shivering energies. But, in that cramped and foul-smelling corner—what super-Solomonic visions! From a life of hard-headed, practical money-getting, of diplomacy, of lithe evasions of petty or powerful attacks, of escapes from tricks and traps and cunningest pit-falls (set either by Jealousy or Hate) he would retire at night into this secret den, thence to retire once more and yet more deeply, into the magnificent chambers of his own soul. And, in those chambers, he would stalk and brood, like king of kings, until at length there would come to him such bright,

improbable phantasmagoria as neither poppy nor mandragora hath ever conferred on any of Gentile dreaming.

And mostly he saw himself in the house of Lampadephorus, and Seneca coming to visit him. The words that they said and the thoughts they experienced— Neither poppy nor mandragora!

Once again, on a day, had Simon of Cyrene achieved the toppling tragedy of success. But, yet again, came messenger after messenger with tidings of misfortune. And at length came one with news of further losses, both in ships and caravans: the last of all his ships, the last of all his caravans.

"All? All? What sayest thou? 'All'? All gone? All? I am nothing but the shadow of a dream! Revenge! Ambition! Nothing!"

And he cast dust on his head, and fell down to the ground, and grovelled there like a worm that is wholly lost.

But, in the midst of his deep downheartedness, he chanced to look upward. And there he beheld Cæsar, the Lord of All This World, smiling down upon him.

For a moment the Jew could not believe the wonder of that smile. Cæsar was smiling at him—at him, even Simon of Cyrene.

Then Cæsar stooped, and lifted him up, and embraced him and kissed him upon the mouth most fervently. "Thou art very dear to me," he said, "O Cyrenian Simon."

CHAPTER XLI

Lift up Thine Heart, O Job bar-Job: Thou Art on the Path to the Stars

Slaves by numerous water-clocks had already called the gallicinium (or time when cocks begin to crow) and now in the streets before the houses of the great, there had begun to form the customary throngs of suitors, clients, visitors, idlers, fools. One of the largest of the multitudes had got itself together a trifle earlier than the rest in the wide and well-paved space before a massive, brass-doored domus which stood on the boundary between the Subura and the Carinæ.

"Simon of Cyrene is a prominent man," quoth one among the many.

"Thou sayest truly, Mobilis. But thinkest thou that his prominence will endure? Is it not like to a frost before the shining sun of Cæsar?"

"It will not endure, O Lividulus."

"Sayest thou," inquired another, "that the prominence of Simon of Cyrene will not endure?"

"Yea, for Sarcogenes is against him."

"But," said the other, a person of middling height and weight and very common manners, and whose name, as it seemed, was Vulgus. "Simon of Cyrene is much more powerful than is Sarcogenes, for he hath more weight with Cæsar."

Now, at this moment, who but Sarcogenes himself should be faring along in his litter? And he heard the saying of Vulgus, to wit that Simon of Cyrene was more powerful than he, Sarcogenes, and for this, that he was weightier than he in the mind of Cæsar. And although the multitude shouted lustily, "Long life to Sarcogenes, Comes Principis! Hail, Sarcogenes!" still the man of evil was heavy of heart for that which he had heard. Yet, too, he waved a greeting to the multitude, especially Vulgus and Mobilis, and, smiling, passed on.

"The Jew will not long endure," said then, also, Repetitio—"but, by the shades of Hercules, a fight!"

And so it was, for a certain Timidus had tickled the malformed ear of a giant named Pugilus, and the giant was busy to vanquish him. The which he promptly accomplished, and sent him down the manhole into a sewer.

Then placed Pugilus the lid over the manhole, and all the crowd did laugh right merrily.

But after a time, there came from another direction the selfsame Timidus, reeking with filth. So the crowd did laugh again and hold its noses.

And Timidus went his own way.

Then said Mobilis unto Vulgus, "Behold! this Timidus is well familiar with the streets and passages of Nether Rome."

"Those ways and passages be the resort, full often, of the timid," said Vulgus. "I have hidden therein mine own sweet self—when a many were after me."

"So, too, have I," acknowledged Mobilis. "The blackness, the stench, and the rats! I saw one corpse. Pah! A man must know his way therein or he cometh not again out.—I knew this Simon of Cyrene when he lived in the Regio Judeorum—over yonder. He had not a penny."

"Now he is a Roman citizen and a prominent man.—Will his gates never open?"

"Yea, and more," said one that was called Defectus (A Failure)

"for Cæsar loveth him. That is the reason and the only reason why the fellow prospereth in this way."

Then came one Ridiculus, a wag, who told of how Defectus had lately lost again large moneys in a certain enterprise. "Why sentest thou, O Defectus," inquired he, "a shipload of warm apparel unto Egypt? Knewest thou not that in Egypt—"

But Defectus had slipped away, being high tender about this enterprise.

Then came others up, taking Defectus' place, and calumniated the Jew. "He is negligent of his person," cried Sordes; "too dressy," declared Ornatus. "He hath taken many moneys and all for nothing," whined Astutius and Fraudator in the same breath. "He hath no modesty," said Impudens. "Nor self-confidence," whispered Timidus, who now had returned in other apparel. "Too free with women," said Lascivus. "He is small minded," complained Parvus. "He used to beg," cried Mendicans. And so on.

"Beg," said then Defectus, who had got his countenance once more. "I heard of the fellow when he lived in the Mines of the Wretched. Was he not merely a thief? Believest thou me not, look ye, any man, upon his brow, and behold where Cæsar hath aforetime branded him."

Then came up one whose face was bandaged all about. And he said, "But that was an unjust branding." And he would have said more, but knew not how to utter the thing he would say. He therefore stepped about uneasily, and fidgetted into silence.

And no one in any wise answered him, for that he had no faith in himself. Moreover, he had spoken against Cæsar.

Then spake again Defectus, saying: "What the gods intend to do, that will they accomplish, spite of all the strength and all the weakness, all the folly and all the wisdom of their merely human instruments."

"Thou speakest, O Defectus," said the man called Vulgus, "like a philosopher with a beard a mile long."

"And what the gods intend shall *not* be done, that will in no wise be accomplished—spite of all the strength and all the weakness, all the folly and all the wisdom of their merely human agents. That is the reason why some men who have not so much brains as a sparrow, prosper exceedingly, and build fine houses, and also why some others who are gifted with massive intellects— Will the gates not open?— but look! The games increase each day, and the carts of corpses throng the streets— See! there are some of the bodies falling off."

"Happier even they," said the man with the bandage round his face, but now more boldly, for that he seemed to be in some sort of excitement, "than those who come in the opposite direction. Look! Look ye!"

The crowd looked promptly (being itself in excitement) and beheld a long, pale file of victims bearing crosses. Headed were all for the Esquiline gate.

And Defectus cried aloud and cursed (and a many others with him) for that he had much business with the Jew, the which did truly prevent his witnessing the execution.

Cried a little man, in a feeble voice: "It thundereth terribly."

"No," corrected a big, pompous fellow: "that was the sound of lions newly arrived at the amphitheatre. I watched them all night. If there is anything I fear at all, it's lions; so I—"

"Not so, not so," brake in Mobilis. "But the key in the lock of Simon's great house—I thought I heard the thing grating, and it did nearly turn."

"Thou callest," said Defectus, "this the house of Simon of Cyrene, and speakest as if that man had truly builded it. Yet built he it not. For I mind me of a certain time when the palace (only more brilliant it was then) appertained to Lampadephorus, a most illustrious Greek."

"Who became mightily fallen."

"Or ere he died, a very long time or ere he died. And he—"

But there came up unto Defectus and the friends with whom he spake, the man whose face was muffled. He said, "I pray you, good sirs, tell me who liveth here."

Defectus looked at the man a little before he answered. "Knowest thou not? Thou didst speak for the man a while ago."

"Not for a certainty. I have been afeard— I have come a great—"

"He is Simon of Cyrene, then."

"A Jew?"

"I believe that."

"Is he rich?"

At this, Defectus and Ridiculus and one called Stupidus looked at one another with a smile. "Whence hast thou come?"

"Greece." Then, after a time, and in a quivering voice: "Is the man—hospitable unto strangers?"

"Hast thou never indeed heard about Simon of Cyrene, mighty man and intellectual, and patron of all the arts?" asked Defectus. "That man is high hospitable—at his own high price."

The stranger, moving a step or two, made answer: "I have heard a little of this Simon of Cyrene, yet not much. He is a priest— We all sleep in the tents of Shem— But what, O strangers, of my former questions? Is Simon of Cyrene very rich? Or liveth he only grandly? The two are not the same, ye wot. Is he safe or in danger? Doth he need help, as do most rich men? Hath he many servants, and hath he a capable steward over them, or" (he began to laugh as it were a right good joke) "needeth he yet another?"

Defectus grinned long. "He can have as many as he needeth, for he hath bought and sold Rome," said he.

"The whole world," corrected Vulgus.

"He is a thief," went on Defectus.

"Hath already a many servants," added Mobilis.

"He hath lost a steward lately, as I hear," put in Curiosus. "I should like myself to know much more about the matter."

Then said all together, "He is never safe, and he hath no friends. Beware thou of him, and help him not in any wise—lest thou also suffer, even as thou seemest truly to have done already."

And at this very time, the man Ridiculus and that other fool which hight Stupidus, grabbing at the bandage which swathed the stranger's face all round about, tore it completely away for a joke, and then—stood staring.

Yea, they looked very much ashamed. And, turning, they went slowly to the back of the crowd.

And a many of the others, when they had looked on the bare and naked contenance of this man, turned round quickly, and gat them to a distant portion of the street—but only in time to shout: "The Lord! The Lord!"

Then came Cæsar, passing in his litter of gold. Anteambulatores went before him, pedisequii behind, and after these his many guards in steel and brass and flaming scarlet. A trumpet blew. The walls echoed. One cried, "Cæsar goeth to the games!" The people fell and grovelled on their faces, moaning: "O Cæsar! Cæsar, thou art God!" Cæsar looked at the multitude with anxious scrutiny, for he wished to know whether his influence over his people (that is, as a god) was in any wise getting less.

About this time the brazen doors of Simon's domus groaned on their hinges, and, at the end, did utter a cry, a shriek of pain intolerable. And a many of the crowd that were nearest the gates when they heard the turning, suddenly stood up, and rushed thickly into the mighty building, leaving the god of all the world, even Cæsar, with an arrow of envy rankling in his foolish heart.

CHAPTER XLII

The House of the Jew and The House of the Serpent

Now in his secret chamber, the place whereof was known to none but himself, Simon of Cyrene had faintly heard his old slave, Chronos (he that sate in the distant atrium by the side of the silver water clock, bearing in his hands a great scythe) moaning (like as it were a voice from beyond the tomb): "Conticinium, conticinium! A new day is born. Be ye, therefore, merry, and lay all fears away." Simon thereupon quickly arose, and, from a secret vantage ground, beheld that the peoples were gathering (as he had feared that they might not do) in the square before his palace. He knew that he was overglad that they had come. Apparelling himself, he partook of certain viands, and further prepared that he might go forth and hold his levy in the hall of gold.

But then a great fear knocked at his heart, and he stopped with his hand on the secret door of the room, feeling as it were all the pulses in his veins. "O Adonai! Adonai! I, thy priest, am wholly afeard, for lo I have had a sordid combat with this world."

And he asked, Had there been a purpose running through his life. Yea, by the gold that is in the Temple. And so should there continue forevermore to be? Yea, by the very shekinah. "And when I have no further need of thee, I will break thee and yet keep thee."

Simon of Cyrene, pressing upon the door, it gave. And he left his safe, prayer-filled cubiculum, and, by a narrow passage, went into another not quite so secret, way. And so, by soft degrees, came forth unto certain wider and less hidden corridors, which those of his servants whom he most nearly trusted, did also, in some manner, know about.

Now he had well-nigh reached the closed, narrow gate which would open upon his dais in the hall of audience.

Again he paused.

For there came upon him, of a sudden, the premonition of a happiness greater than he had ever known before—mingled, however, with fears (which came again) of blackest dye. "Perhaps," thought he, "such moods are common to the exalted."

The exalted!

He was clad, this Simon of Cyrene, in a golden gear, and he knew that, as he walked, his limbs were bathed in showers of flaming splendor. The walls about him were of curious marble set with plates of shining gold and gems. Yet was his heart wax, and his limbs water.

For he knew in his soul that all of the things which he mundanely was, and all of the things which ever he might mundanely hope to be, were built and founded on the fickle will of Cæsar.

Then he went on yet a little nigher to his audience room, but with ever a more and more doubtful heart, so that, at length, he took vain counsel with himself whether he should then and there go into the chamber, or should wait till another day. In the end, he thought he would take his fortune, God being with him. Yet he continually turned over in his mind how he might do in this case and again in that, and he also felt for his swords beneath his splendid garments, and found them, and gloried in his strength, which had never yet been vanquished.

He opened the gate, and threw it from him, as he that was lord of the place might very well do.

And he entered in all his shining vesture.

And the audience was hushed.

And he went quickly and sate upon his golden seat in the middle of the dais, which was of amber. And alabaster pillars were set and ranged on the borders of the dais, to the right hand and to the left, and over the pillars clomb many a vine whose leaves were made of the dust of emeralds and whose grapes were single rubies. And the colors of the place were those of a tropical forest, but nowhere was there any graven image, or a sign of the gods or of God. And there was ever a little music far away, and waves of myrrh and cinnamon ran continually into the chamber.

Then, as the Jew had not yet spoken, the standing multitude burst into loud acclaim and wishes of prosperity at this, the earliest, levee of the Jew.

Simon said unto them, "I thank you all: be seated."

When the audience was set in their silver seats, the master of the house would then have spoken a little speech to them, but many a peregrinus came forward toward him quickly, laden with lordly presents, as though he were a king. Great horns of ivory they bore, from Cyrenaica; bowls and baths of silver from the Laurion mines; out of Africa, peacocks and apes; from Persia frankincense and myrrh; and stuffs of silk from China, and byssus out of Egypt, and clanking, clamorous ingots from the Mines of the Wretched.

And sweet were the words that went with each of the gifts, and at the giving of each gift and the making of each speech, the crowd again arose, shouted wild acclaims and wishes for yet greater prosperity unto him that ruled this house.

Then up ran negroes, who beat their brows on the pavement before

the Jew's throne, crying: "We are sent unto thee, O Simon of Cyrene, by Nummus and Praesens Pecunia to be as thy slaves forever; and this is also a gift."

Again there were loud acclaims. Defectus cried, "Great is Simon of Cyrene, Simon the just and the merciful!" Mobilis and Vulgus echoed Defectus, shouting, even as it were with trumpets: "Just and merciful! Just and merciful!"

Arose Simon of Cyrene in all his robes of regal splendor (remembering that so he had oft beheld himself, dreaming in the Mines of the Wretched, and, underneath a bag, about the Roman Campagna) and said unto those assembled: "Fellow citizens of Rome, clients and visiting peregrini, and mine own *familia* also: welcome unto you into this room of audience. Twice and three times welcome. Be ye once more seated. Each and every morning, come ye yet again into this hall of audience. For ye shall be ever welcome till time shall be for me no more."

Then cried Ridiculus and Defectus in a common voice, "Music! Music! Simon of Cyrene is a merchant of endless genius: let us hear his voice!" Vulgus and Mobilis echoed, "Let us hear his voice!"

But Simon said, "Not music first. It is meet that justice should, at the outset of an audience, be arranged for. And behold, I am truly sorry that he who was hitherto my steward (Vociferatio Religiosus) hath proved unworthy, and been sent out of my home. The man was a Christian, and, at that, unworthy." He had well-nigh added, "as are all idolaters," but sealed his lips, and none too soon. "Now I have no steward that shall lead the claimants up, but only the atriensis. Yet may he suffice."

There then was led up unto the Jew a man which lived in the Forum Boarium. He cried, "A boon, powerful Lord! Spare thou my brother, who is much in debt to thee, and hath nothing. And give him a gift of moneys (a thousand sesterces, if thou likest) that he may start once more in life."

Simon inquired, "Thy brother's name?"

"Anopheles" (Useless).

Said Simon unto him, "It is ever pleasanter to grant than to withhold. Moreover, that this, mine earliest act at this mine earliest sessions, may be prophetic of a kindly future for the house, I do hereby grant all thou askest. Be it so, Secretary. Make thou the record, and thou, O Treasure-bearer, pay the sum."

There was then brought up unto the Jew a scrawny man in rags, who was a-tremble. At first he could not speak. Then said he, "Mercy, Master. Kill me not. I have run from thy country place

beyond the Alps, and would say to thee how miserable we are, all thy slaves that be in that place. For lo, we are beaten every day until we fall to earth. And this is by him thou didst settle over us. Little have we to eat at any time or clothes to wear, or medicine for sickness. And pestilence breeds among us every hour."

Said Simon to his servants, "Take thou this man and feed him well, and set him in better apparel. See unto it that a proper one is put above my slaves whence he hath come. Fail not." He smiled upon the messenger, and kissed him, and lifted him up.

Then cried out Defectus (and was echoed as before), "O wonderful Jew! O patron of all the arts, likewise of mercy!"

And one in a corner cried, in a little harsh voice: "Music! Let us have the music!"

Others shouted, chief among them Defectus: "Let us hear *thy* voice, O Simon of Cyrene, thy most incomparable voice."

Simon said unto them, No, he sang not any more.

But they would not be appeased.

Then called Simon a certain slave, a Greek, Harmonius, saying: "Hear ye him: he is my musician."

And when the Greek had both played and sung a song about the uncertain tenure of power, wealth, and life, and had finished his music, he stepped softly up before his master, and, with a delicate little mystery, handed unto him a shepherd's harp.

Simon took the harp, and looked upon it, and slowly suffered his fingers to stray among the founts of sweet melody. Even as oft he had played in far Pentapolis, so played he now, singing of his old-time life among the sheep-filled pastures.

And the lights of flattery died out of innumerable faces. And some of the peoples turned down their eyes, beholding again the sweetness of days that were gone, while others, gazing wide-eyed on walls or ceiling, were happily alone with what they had wished to be. And one did hide his face within his garment, that his soul's nakedness might not be seen.

When Simon had finished, he said, softly in the magic hush: "Come hither, sweet one," unto a child that stood near his throne. And he gave her the harp to keep as a gift forever, saying afterwards: "Wast thou one of my petitioners, and have I overlong delayed thee, little statue of a mighty joy?"

Said the child, "I am one of many children who have brought thee gifts. And lo! we were frightened, and had no chance that we should say unto thee the things we were bidden to say. But now we say them: Out of the hills of far Calabria do we come, bearing sun-

filled grapes in a silver basket—for this, that thou, in years agone, wast kind—kind beyond reason or measure—unto the people of Brundisium. Thou hast forgot, O mighty one—there was a famine—they have not forgot."

She went up close to the Master on his very dais, and bowed, and knelt before him, and offered him the grapes.

Simon took of the grapes and would have eaten, but that, as it were at a signal, up rose two mighty forms from right and left of the dais, and rushed upon him, bearing bright blades.

But Simon, having been forewarned by his many fears about this day, had not been blind to the attack. And he caught the giants by the poniard wrists, and brake the bones thereof. Then said he unto the men, "Shall I send you to Cæsar's courts, or will ye eat these grapes, and, if ye live, be free?" (For now he was again suspicious of all things.)

They said, "We know nothing at all about these grapes, having been sent to kill thee by Sarcogenes, who said nothing of grapes. Nor do we like the thought of crosses. And so we will eat your grapes."

And the twain, having eaten, fell at once dead.

Then was much confusion in the room. And the men that were dead were taken forth publicly. And servants and friends of Simon interrogated the children concerning the grapes. These said unto them that the grapes had been given into their hands by a beautiful woman, Hypocrisia.

"She!" cried out then Simon of Cyrene. "She is herself but a servant of Ophidion. Now, as ye may all know, this Ophidion is an ancient enemy of mine, he who now calleth himself (since he would be known under another name) 'Sarcogenes.'"

At this some invisible force lifted the eyes of Simon beyond his dais, and took them to the curtains of Tyrian web wherewith the passage to an outer court and so into the street, was gloriously forehidden.

And there he beheld a most marvelous sight, a man with his face in a bandage, yet whose eyes (as he thought) were the eyes of Jesus.

. . . . But, meanwhile, there had gone out into the street, following the bodies of the men that had died, a goodly multitude, receiving each, however, a sportula (or basket full of gifts) as he left the door.

And a many of these, when they had considered, said: "It is meet that all who so desire should be clients of two, and not of one only. Let us therefore make the ciconia backward at the house of Simon of Cyrene, then pass on to the house of Sarcogenes, attending

the sessions of that man also, and also receive, as we come away from him, the sportulæ of that house."

So they ran quickly (for lo, the distance was not far) unto the great space which lay before the iron doors of Sarcogenes. Barbarus and Molestus; Defectus, Vulgus, and Mobilis, yea and a many others also ran. And, before the portals of old Sarcogenes the Evil, joined themselves unto a many others which were in waiting at that place.

And Vulgus, for that the waiting was long, said to the rest of the multitude: "Let us play at a court of justice the while we wait for entrance." He pulled a lid from a sewer-way, and sate upon it edgewise, as it were a tribunal, and said then unto Defectus (as he himself had been a Roman prætor): "Thou, sirrah, standest accused of shipping heavy clothing into Egypt."

Whereat a great shout rose, and Defectus would have gone away indignant. But Levis, Inconstans, and Inconsideratus, Roman citizens all, did hold him.

Said Vulgus, "I am the prætor, thou wottest well. Wouldst leave my court informally and sans permission? We shall see. Come, delator, read thy delation. Next we shall have the proof. Then, moreover inasmuch and notwithstanding, whereas and in view of the legal facts, the matter may come to an execution. Thank the gods at any time for an execution. But, first, we must have justice. First of all and always cometh justice, even while the prætor like the culprit not, and knoweth full well he intendeth to convict him."

But, by this, one of the men that stood on the edge of the crowd, cried hoarsely: "Cæsar! Cæsar! He returneth from the games. Break up the jest!"

Then bowed a many of the people, and grovelled in the dust again, even as they had done before the house of Simon of Cyrene.

But Mobilis stood and whispered unto them that held Defectus, "Continue ye to hold him, and I will make sport even before Cæsar."

And he ran up unto Vulgus, and pushed him off the sewer-lid, crying in a tone of authority: "Sirrah! stand down from that tribunal. For I am Cæsar, and I will take this case (because of its importance) into mine own hands." For such in truth was the custom of Cæsar in cases that did concern the welfare of the whole world or his own dignity and godhead.

And Mobilis struck Vulgus on the ear and sent him sprawling, and did take from him the seat of sewer-justice.

And Cæsar laughed (for he saw that his people were laughing, and he feared them in the mass) and, passing within the doors of Sarcogenes, enemy to Simon of Cyrene (which were specially opened

unto him) he calleth back unto the mob: "Ye do well, my people: it is pleasant to see you thus merry."

Meantime, Sarcogenes had arisen (but later than Simon of Cyrene) and, having partaken both of flesh and wine, began to call certain counsellors, and to frame an evil program for yet another day of destruction. But or ere the work was finished, came the Annunciator, crying: "Cæsar! O Master, it is Cæsar!"

And, as Cæsar came on, thrusting his tallowy body into the apartment, the master of the house did cry: "Away with you all, my counsellors!" He fell on his face, and worshipped Cæsar.

But Cæsar lifted Sarcogenes up, and the two sate down together at the table of counsel.

Then said Cæsar (and his words were like the voice of a demon from the throat of a hippopotamus), "How is my long-time favorite, after the revels of three nights agone?"

Sarcogenes leaned over and whispered in the giant ear. Cæsar cried, "Is it even so? Thou hast said enough." He laughed heartily. And the Man of Sin, thinking to take advantage of the pleasant mood wherein he had got his sovereign, supplicateth: "A boon."

"Say on," quoth Cæsar.

"There is one that liketh neither thee nor me," continued Sarcogenes, remembering that, on the very day, Vulgus had declared in the presence of a multitude that Simon of Cyrene was much more powerful than he, even Sarcogenes: "There is one that liketh neither thee nor me. He also waxeth much too powerful, and now, each day, the people begin to follow him to the mighty neglect not only of me but also of thee, great Cæsar."

He stopped, seeing he had got old Cæsar on his side. For Cæsar remembered the way with which a many of the people, on that very morning, had arisen, in the near presence and countenance of him, Cæsar, and rushed into the house of the Jew, even as if the Lord of All this World were a stinking fungus.

Said Cæsar, "I hate the Jew."

Whispered Sarcogenes, "He is ripe to die."

But Cæsar: "Lend thou me ten million sestertia." His fat, hairy hand went forth.

The Man of Sin saith: "I have not so much to lend. The revels—"

Cæsar: "How may I do without the Jew, then? Thou art very useful unto me as Master of the Revels, but, whenever I say to thee, 'Ten million sestertia!' then answerest thou, 'I have it not.' The Jew hath it ever. He knoweth how— And he revelleth not at all, but

saveth like an ant. Then, as I be man of refinement, I rob him, and he doth not scream. He knoweth too well the look of the mines, the sharp edge of the sword, the bloody cross. All that man's flesh is full of memories."

Sarcogenes bowed his head that the Lord of all this World might not see the fires glowing within him. Thought he, "May my other plans against the Cyrenian not miscarry so." But Cæsar believed the posture was a calm resignation unto the will of him, Cæsar.

And there were in Cæsar's mind other reasons for the which he would not wholly dispose of this Simon of Cyrene, as, to wit, that often he, Cæsar, was troubled in his dreams (even as were a many of his people also) wherein he was holden to task by Jehovah, the God of Simon. And he feared Jehovah exceedingly, though, for the greater part, he managed not to think of Him.

So he looked upon his favorite, Sarcogenes (whom he loved) and touched him with his hand, and said unto him: "Be not downcast; for I, thy Lord, have come unto thee to tell thee by the words of mine own lips that I have purposed further revels of a kind in which thy soul delighteth. Moreover, as oft of yore, I would have thee plan these revels. Let them be far greater than any in the past. Thou shalt have the money—fear not. Simon of Cyrene shall pay."

Sarcogenes kissed the hand of Cæsar, saying: "I was wrong." But, in his heart, his hatred of the Jew had increased.

Cæsar perceived his mind, and said: "Why hatest thou this Simon of Cyrene so? I have heard thou art thyself of a sect of the Jews."

Sarcogenes arose with a piercing cry, and pressed his hand over his heart, as though the hand were a veritable shield against some arrow. And when he could again speak, he said: "It is nothing but a sickness I have had from of old—a certain pain— It is nothing— Yes, truly, I am a Christian, for the Christians are a sect of Jewry which is hated of the Jews. Also, I find it profitable to know these Christians: for thus do I secure both for thee and for me certain advantages over those foolish people. Thinkest thou I really believe on Christ?"

Then he screamed again, and again did lay his hand upon his heart and bow himself. Again he said unto his Lord, "It is nothing."

"Thy pain remindeth me," said Cæsar, "that I have heard great tales of thy cruelty unto thy servants, and of great screams which have been heard from thy house."

"I have flayed servants alive, the worser thereof, whenever it was necessary, Lord."

"Oh well, whenever it seemeth necessary. We must not be too merciful. Think out thy plan for the revels, Comes, and let me know thy thought. As to thee and the Jew, cause me to perceive which one of you best deserveth my favors." He was gone.

Sarcogenes went and stood in a place of watching. He beheld that Cæsar, being now without the domus, had joined unto himself Thanatos, in the midst of all his servants.

Then returned Sarcogenes, and stood with his back to his own way of entrance, and his face in the way of all the rest of his house. Like Lucifer he was: tall and lithe and dark and bright, and, in a way, beautiful. Then said he, "The curses of Satan on this day. But, first of all, I will set my secret agents at their work, reserving for a later hour the more pleasant things. He strook upon a gong, and when the servant had come, said to him: "Give thou commands that the keeper of my gates shall be beaten upon the feet until he dieth, for that, today, he hath admitted unto my house one who said disagreeable things."

Said the servant, "It shall be done."

Sarcogenes stalked to a distant apartment, and closed the door. Not a sound could be heard, more than in the heart of a forgotten hill.

He went to a panel in the stone wall and pressed, and the panel slid, and behold! an enormous concourse of motley peoples came flocking into the room. And arranged themselves, and stood at attention. All their eyes did hang upon the lips of him, Sarcogenes. And all these peoples were afraid to come anigh unto him, because of the lightnings of his countenance.

Then began the Masterful to give instructions about the day.

Unto one man he saith, "There dwelleth deep within the Subura a plebeian known as Stultus, ignorant, untrained, inconsecrate. Him thou canst not spoil, but him thou mayest use for deeds of lechery and violence. Turn thou him into an instrument—" He leaned and whispered in his henchman's ear, who smiled sweetly for that he had been whispered to by so great a lord.

Went the fellow forth at once, and Sarcogenes calleth unto him three others—Pandarus, Sycophantus, and Kleptes. Said the Master, "Ye all do know the things which have been done unto you by him that sought to reform you by violence, even Philedonus of old. Listen." He stooped and whispered his plot. Then louder, "There is a Candidus also. He dwelleth on the Pincian Hill. Him hate I. See thou unto him. An upright man, he may at the first rebel; but,

after a little, he will justify the deed and take the bribe. Be gone.—Pornographus?''

''Master.''

''Knowest thou Integer, a knight?''

''I know him.''

''Thou canst easily guess the will which I would have thee work upon him.''

''I guess.''

''A hypocritical appearance of austerity and Christian love. If that succeed not, the mask aside, and all the arts thou knowest. Seduce him. Be gone.

''Cain and Judas be my guide! Now whom shall I select for the Trans-Tiber? Fellow! Thou! Come here. In the Regio Judeorum —see unto it that on every day Parush becometh more 'separate,' that the old horse-leech, Alukah, sucketh ever harder and more hard; that Keseel is daily and hourly more a fool; Na-aph more concupiscent, and Gannab a thief. Away!

''As for Philautia, let me see—thou, Madam. Thou art in her employ.'' He whispered, ''Delicate snares for her. She is Cæsar's wife. Yes, yes; thou art correct. Those are— Simple whispers in the ear. She is Cæsar's wife. Whispers, infinite suggestion—thou knowest.

''Now come thou, sirrah! Nay, thou.'' By these words he called unto him a man of his own hewing and polishing. To him he gave a bag of gold, promising yet other bags and heavier, in case a certain work (whereof he whispered most slyly in his ear) were done successfully. ''Vengeance is sweet to me,'' said he, at length. ''Forget not, I will not forget thee.''

But as soon as the man had departed (which he did, saying ''I know where all the others can be found, and will not mention thy name to any of them'') then called Sarcogenes another man, saying in the softest of whispers: ''Follow thou after him fleetly, and see where he goeth. If he do a certain deed of crime, speak thou not unto him concerning it, but catch him in a secret place, and there despatch him, so that he may not return to me or come again anigh this house.''

He gave the man money, and the man promised to do as he had been instructed, and departed quickly and yet warily. And indeed they had all gone forth by the secret door in the wall.

Then calleth the Tempter of Our Brethren a mighty group of delators and secret agents up before him, some of whom laid in his hands little scrolls containing reports, and were given yet other

commissions to perform upon that day, or upon other days. And he gave unto them all certain commands, saying to each: "It is my will," or else "I will have this done: see thou unto it." And then to the whole body he cried, "Be on your ways. Stop not, any of you, for aught at all—for rain or for dust, for mud or for cold, heat or night or terrible tempest. And wherever ye do go, sneer ye and jeer ye at this Simon of Cyrene and at Christ—them twain crucifers. Go—shatter, decay, burn, seduce, transfix, kill, damn utterly."

And they left him, and he passed, foaming with a rage which, till now, he had just been able to conceal, into the courts where his slaves were.

He took them at their various works, and tortured them. Of the one he struck an ear off, of another a hand, and yet another, who ventured to oppose him, he cast upon the ground, vomiting language which had come from the refuse of all the tongues of earth. Him he beat with a tribulum, and, afterwards, flayed alive.

And his servants fled before him through all the passages of his house.

And when the Seducer of Our Brethren had glutted his lust for suffering, he went into a secret apartment where none did follow, and, closing the door, stood for a time with his great hands clasped behind his back, and his eyes upturned to heaven.

"Almighty God," he said, at length, "I hate thee. Tyrant of the universe, 'tis thou I despise. How I hate you also, ye illimitable legions of angels."

The man threw up his hands once more, clutching at his bosom. He said, "I seem to have in me a lump of ice for a heart. Blessed Lucifer, guide thou me to a cure for this."

He went and stood before a polished pier of metal. Rending the clothing from his breast, he beheld in the mirror, directly over his heart, a deep cavern of corruption, which made him faintish. He applied to the place a hot iron. Then said he, "I am ever worse within. How come I to be so? How, rather, else? I believe on Christ and tremble, yet—

"Ah Satan, thou art my god, mayhap my father in the flesh. Who wast thou, really, O my father, and thou, my mother also? None know. Shepherds, ye found me in a cave, dwelling with vipers. The snakes ye killed, but me ye took with you into your home. Later, ye wished ye had taken the vipers. There was a theka about my neck. Afterward, in Babylon, the chief of the temple-prostitutes did claim me as her son—a certain Theomachus, or Fighter against

God, being (she said) my sire. Soon went she in the way of all that stand in my path.

"Then came my wanderings—Egypt, Asia, Gaul, Hispania, Rome, all the varied corners of this mundane universe. For a time a maker and seller of foul images, a hired and willing assassin, a priest in many temples, here and yon; a delator unto Cæsar; the chief delator and accuser of all good; and now—thanks to the interest and manners of myself, a companion of the Prince, even Cæsar, Lord of all this World."

He went and opened the door, and looked out into the court, thinking he had heard secret footsteps. But all was silent and devoid of motion—saving one great, sliding star, which went down out of the zenith and into an unfathomable gloom.

The man shuddered, and went within again.

"Thou, O Christ, sometimes I love thee." So he mused. "But thou art the Ancient of Days. A tyrant! Wilt thou brook a friendship? No; thou art too solitary! Wouldst thou go forth with me in a bout at drinking? Nay—not a companion. Then to thyself, and I— Hast thou made a perfect universe, having the power? No. It is so full of error and wrong I laugh always at it and at thee. Yea, in thy face I tell thee thy work was *not* good. And thine image! Thou madest man in thine own image—laughter of Satan. What is man?

"Hadst thou not power upon thy side, O Ancient of Days, I say it plainly unto thee— But no! I will up and down in the streets of the world. Here a word, there a syllable! How I hate— Mostly I hate the Jew. Also Christopherus and his kind. What about the Jew? I had nearly forgotten thee, Jew.

"Why dost thou prosper, contemptible Simon of Cyrene, man of little talent, fool, enthusiast, ape? Thine indefinite and unapproachable tyrant, Jehovah, doth He ever and again renew thy strength? Canst thou not wear out, even when illimitable woes are placed upon thee? And why, Jehovah, dost thou sit upon thy solitary throne, creating world after world, constellation after constellation, universe after universe? Art thou not weary of time and space, which flow forever from thine infinite, unreasonable bosom? Why dost thou create new streams of beings, whose happiest lot in universes like these were only to die, never to live again.

"And yet thou makest them to live again!

"Now, as to thee, O Jew. I did tempt thy father, Shem, and cause his fearful downfall, and that of his father before him also. For lo! I am older than a many believe. And thee, O Simon of

Cyrene, thee I tempted both in Egypt by Emah, and again (when I knew thee better) in old Petra, where I had thee. And then, in Palestine—thou didst tempt thyself. Then again, when thou hadst been fully castigated (by thy Lord) away from all images forever, in the belly of the Babylonia, then didst thou make for thyself, being returned to Canaan, yet a substitute for images, and didst worship the foolish multiplications of thy law. 'Shall a man be justified if he do eat of an egg that was laid upon the Sabbath?' Now by the gods of laughter! And, in these later days, thou makest yet another idol out of thy fear of Christianity: thou dost worship that fear.

"Thou bearest the cross—"

He stood by a pillar and leaned on it, lost in gloomy recollections.

He pulled a silken cord. A gong rang, a far door opened, and there appeared, walking down the scarlet stretches of the room, that man he had sent in the morning after yet another man, to slay him. He said to the man, when that he had come close up: "Knowest thou Simon of Cyrene?" "Yea, Lord, I know him." "Then—" He leaned close over and whispered, saying, at the close: "Now go."

Sarcogenes crieth, when the man was well away: "May his arms wither; his Jewish heart melt; his bones be crumbling wax; his reason totter; yea and fall into nothing, and his soul perish in the fires of Gehenna. Curse thou him, O Satan, in the name of all evil."

His voice dropped to a hoarse whisper, and he kept conversing with some imaginary presence at which he vainly shook his daggered fist from time to frequent time. "In sin and craft and sorrow hast thou worked, O Simon of Cyrene, yea and in worse sorrow, sin, and cunning thou shalt die."

CHAPTER XLIII

The Man Without a Face

Meantime, in the atrium of Simon, peace had settled down, and Simon's clients had got their sportulæ and gone. And Simon had hearkened to the complaints of a many of his servants, and settled their morepart foolish grievances. And all the while he had kept the tail of his eye upon the man whose face was muffled with a bandage—all but his strange, sweet eyes. At length he saw that that shambling person was working nearer and nearer to the exit.

Cried Simon, "Why camest thou in hither, sirrah? Was it, thou mightest torment me?"

The man began to run. But servants catched him, and brought him to the lord of the house.

"Strip off thy bandage," said the Master.

The man groaned, lifted not his hand.

Then bade the Master his servants to take the bandage off.

This they did, and there stood before them all—a man without a face.

Looked Simon of Cyrene upon the man during long moments, for the face was a char, a red, cicatricial mask of shapelessness. But, in time, the eyes spake to him; for there was in their depths the idle blueness of a summer sky, yet a grayish earnestness also, and love. At length the Master: "It may have been in a dream I saw thee, O strange man, as thou standest there even now by my dais. Or ere this minute have I seen thee so. And behold! from the beginning of time it hath been decreed I should look upon thee as thou standest there—for who can avoid the sentence of the Almighty?"

"I chose to be here," said the man. "It was my own free will that bade me to come."

"But I chose not," said Simon; "yet I am quite as near unto thee as thou—"

At this, the tuneful tone of the old slave by the water clock brake in, both solemn and sweet: "Time, the mysterious gift, is fast a-going; yet there are happy, happy hours that are still to be."

"Thou didst choose?" said Simon.

"I chose." The man without a face did not quite look at the Master, and he gazed not, either, at any of the others round about.

Then there came confusion into the mind of Simon, confusion and many disorderly images, for he tried to remember if ever he had beheld this strangest man before. Some of the pictures were near and some distant, some clearly seen, some only hinted: others were mere mists or shadows which one mist will cast upon another. Christopherus? Lampadephorus? Amahnah? Glimpses, hints, echoes, suggestions—nothing.

The man said again, "I chose." And the Master noted that the voice was husky and a little trembling.

"He saith he would be as a servant to thee, O Simon, perchance thy steward also—on a future day," said some of them around the Master.

"What wouldst thou do?" asked Simon of Cyrene. "Rather, what canst thou?"

"Try," said the man without a face.

The Master was pleased, yet, to test the man, he pretended contrariwise. "Try what?"

"To serve thee—thee and all the people in thy house, all whomsoever I may meet here or elsewhere. I would serve them, I would truly attempt it." As he spake, he grew somewhat bolder. He looked in the eye of Simon with confident pleading, also with great concern and compassion, as if there were here—behind that strange offence of countenance—not only a willing servant but a kindly lord.

Simon was moved. Therefore said he, partly because he would not have it seem that he was moved: "Prithee to pardon me—I have to inquire. Thy nothingness of countenance, why hast thou—"

The man looked straightforwardly upon Simon, and answered and said unto him: "It is, in part, because I had little of individuality to begin with; in part, because, in the struggle for pay (and all men struggle therefor) I lost the little countenance I had. I am but a common man, O Master, a foolish average, a cicatricial blank. Who shall struggle with Mammon—struggle for existence—and not— Yet may I be of a certain use unto thee, and, God willing—"

But the Master brake in. "Didst thou not destroy thy face that thou mightest thereby screen the rest of thee from some undesired recognition?"

"Nay, Master. I was injured—the unjust—even as thou—"

"Thy nationality?"

"I am partly Cappadocian and partly German; partly Italian and partly—I know not what—partly Gaul—"

"Gaul. Art thou, then, worshipper of Cernunnos—a follower of the Druids?"

The man without a face swallowed thrice and spake no word, as if he feared to say to the Jew concerning his religion. But Simon, perceiving the embarrassment, said: "Needst not answer. Some of my servants are Christians, yet do I trouble them not. If only they obey the maxims of Noah—understandest thou?"

"Yea."

"Their religions are their own affair.—Thy name?"

But the man without a face said: "I will give thee merely a name which I myself of late have chosen. It is Conatus, an Attempt. For behold, this is all I am."

Quoth Simon, "Get thee down, Conatus, to yonder court. Thou wilt see there a great chest. Bring it hither unto me."

The man went forth, and brought the chest.

"Set it yonder."

Conatus set the great box down.

"Is it heavy?"

"Not *now*, Master."

So the Jew saw that the man was disinclined to remember hardships, and that, withal, he was cheerful enough, and, in a way witty. Yet, still, the Master dissembled. Said he, "Wilt thou be as thy predecessor, he whom I so carefully chose—thoughtless, indifferent, abstracted, forgetful, absentminded, slipshod, unsystematic, traitorous to my interests? But no, I see thou wouldst be worse."

"I would guard thee," cried the man, "thee and others if I might—and keep away evil—"

"Swear thou wilt guard me faithfully, wilt work no woe on me or on my house."

Conatus sware.

But Simon moaned. "My heart misdoubts. I think thou art a man of craft unusual, and that evil will come—perchance some kind of idolatry. Therefore, I will reject—but whither art thou?"

The man stepped back, dropping his head, as if he attempted to remember a story he had made up. Again he looked bravely forth, and, sighing, merely answered: "Life's storms. They have driven me across the world and all— I—about it. Misunderstood—not successful working for myself—the mines, the terrible mines. Say further? The mines—I am a fearful—I have failed."

And Simon looked upon the man and read him, though he had no face. The wounded pride, the unequal will, the yet lingering shadow of a horrible past, all life's bruises and burdens, even the mines! He understood. "Come thou," said he.

Then took he the man without a face into numerous parts of his house, shewing and explaining, and reaching unto him bunches of keys. Doors opened softly before them. They climbed stairs, threaded innumerable and seemingly immeasurable corridors (wherein no god was seen) went into court after court, room after room—even secret crypts were a little pointed out. But the secretest portions of the house, these showed the Master not unto Conatus for the present.

At length said Simon, "Now I will give thee the last of the keys."

Shook the hand of Conatus, as he received the keys. And the Master thought, "It is well. I think I understand thy nature."

And Simon new apparelled the man, and fed him abundantly. Then saith, "Thou needest not hide thy countenance, or be in any wise ashamed of it, for it is not thy work but that of the unjust. And thou shalt be in my house my steward, my æditus, and, in the street, my nomenclator.

"And this," continued the Master, "is the time of week when I go forth to the Trans-Tiber that I may give alms."

Therefore servants came, bringing heavy baskets, and they all went forth of the house, bearing the baskets. Simon and his nomenclator walked side by side: and in front, those of the familia known as anteambulatores; behind, the pedisequii.

And they fetched, this little, well-meaning caravan, a compass round about the Forum, for the Master said to Conatus: "It is not, this day, a business day for me." Yet they went forth to the Vicus Tuscus, the old-time shopping street, for, as Simon said, it was here he had fought his mightiest battles or ere he had had Cæsar's favor, and also because of the frankincense and other perfumes which were sold there, and which he snuffed up eagerly.[1]

They came to a synagogue, which was this side Tiber, and there they left certain baskets. Wherefrom they wound about the Forum Boarium and were then heading for the Pons Fabricius.

Said the Master, "Conatus."

"Yea, Master."

"Be thine eyes sharp?"

"Very sharp indeed, Master."

"Look thither, then, at yon fast-passing litter, and tell me who be they that sit within."[1]

"Why, I can do that easily, Master. There are twain within the litter, the Spirit of the World and the bad Christian."

"All Christians are bad, good Conatus."

Conatus fell silent. Then said he, "But Ophidion (or, as he called himself in his Christian days, 'Sarcogenes') is especially bad, O Master, even as a Christian.—And now he smileth and holdeth up his fingers before Cæsar in the form of a Latin cross, then looketh back at thee. Oh, there is yet another in the litter, Master—one that sitteth lean and sullen in his corner. Now he draweth back his bony countenance into the loose folds of his hood, which thereupon doth seem as it were only a great bag filled with an empty shadow of nothing."

"I thank thee, Conatus. Let us hurry to the bridge."

"May I speak, Master?"

"Surely, good Conatus."

"I would tell thee what I heard in a wine-house on the day I came to Rome."

"What heardest thou?"

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[1] On the Jew's love of perfumes and poreblindness, see such works as "The Jewish Encyclopedia," also Ball's "Modern Ophthalmology," 3d ed., p. 739.

"This man, Sarcogenes. He sate before a crowd of the vilest in the place, and did abuse thee shamefully. Oh, he is not any friend of thine, my Master. Saith he to the crowd, 'Hast thou seen the chambers in the Jew's great house—that which he truly builded not, but merely made over. And how indeed hath he made it over, the dwelling wherein did once abide even Lampadephorus, the illustrious Greek! He hath filled it with flaming colors which sicken the stomach, and with platings of silver and gold, that the eyes may be dazzled.'

"Then said one Defectus, which stood near: 'He hath a poor eye for color, Lord, even as have all Jews. And he seeth no color at all, save only that it be a strong one.'

"Then saith Sarcogenes, 'Tell me, philosopher, why it is there is not in all his house any likeness of any god—picture, or statue, or bas-relief. Now, why is that?'

" 'I can tell thee, Lord,' saith Defectus. 'The man is impious, and serveth not the gods. He should be run out from the city.'

"But Ridiculus and Mobilis and Vulgus, all of whom did also stand nigh, watching the great lord, even Sarcogenes—then said these: 'He hath one god, this Simon of Cyrene, a Hebrew god, Christ.'

"At this I was like to have fainted, Master; for, O Master, the Lord Sarcogenes—"

"What is that upon the bridge, Conatus?" brake in the Master.

Conatus gazed at the bridge for a time, then saith: "There is on the bridge a crowd. Beyond the bridge yet another, on the island."

"Beggars?"

"Belike. They have a way, these mendicants of thronging about the bridges and in the narrower—"

"Let us be good to them, Conatus: they are needy."

"But keep the better portion of our givings for the sons of Abraham."

"For the sons of Abraham. It is right. For the sons of Abraham."

"But, Master."

"What, Conatus?"

"I saw, just now, as I thought, a little in the rear of those people, the shadowy Thanatos. But sure I cannot be—he is too wavering. And—Master—one of those beggars which be upon the bridge, ariseth, standeth straight and proud, and stretcheth a right hand out, giving orders unto others."

"Well?"

"Such do not beggars use to do."

"It is certain.—Conatus."

"I hear, Master."

"Belike we are in much danger, but we shall turn not back. Call thou the anteambulatores, and send them to the rear of us to join the pedisequii."

"Master!"

"As I tell thee. For then we shall be in the front. If the anteambulatores were first attacked (as they surely would be, if kept before us) would they not flee? And then would flee the pedisequii also, and we should be left to do battle alone, both thou and I. But—"

"Master!"

"But, if we do battle manfully, and show our servants the thing that is right for them to do, then will they follow our ensample, and we shall have victory beyond doubt."

"Master!"

"What, Conatus?"

"I am afeard."

CHAPTER XLIV

No Rest

"Get thee behind me," said Simon to his servant, "for now I go upon the bridge. And fear nothing, for I am a dimachærus, taught by Lampadephorus of ancient Athens. And the Lord is also with me on this day.—But, as to these buildings, many might, it is true, have been builded better— What wouldest thou with me, sirrah?"

"An alms, good sir! O Lord of high magnificence, a little alms."

"Mine almoner cometh in the rear, sirrah. He will greatly aid thee—without mention— What wouldst thou at my throat?"

And behold, the men of Belial were all upon Simon.

But Simon had taken his swords from underneath his garments, and now circled them about in deadly paths.

Then ran one of the men behind Simon, and would truly have slain him, had not Conatus, seeing his Master in great danger, out with his little poniard and stricken the man.

Then gave Conatus a mighty cry of confidence, and shouted: "I have a leader that knoweth the battle!" He stood at the Master's side, and fought man for man enduringly.

And all the servants of the house of Simon, when they saw how

well the Master and his steward did fight, ran up quickly with swords and staves, and drove the villains off the bridge.

And they all, even Simon and the servants that were with him, went on into the Trans-Tiber, and gave their gifts. And coming back across the bridge in the dead night, they met no one but Defectus, who said unto Simon: "It is Sarcogenes who hath done this thing, Sarcogenes the Christian." For he sought reward of Simon.

But Simon answered (because, in his heart, he despised the man): "A thing is patent to the world, O Defectus, when it is seen by such as thee."

Then cried Defectus, losing fear because of anger: "Is it even so, Simon of Cyrene? Know, then, I hate thee terribly, and that, on a day, I will give mighty evidence against thee. Either in private or in public, I will be as a sword in thy side. Remember, though it shall come in a far distant day."

And he made the ciconia after him, and squealed like a pig.

But, on the morrow, Simon received at the hands of a slave a scroll from Cæsar, saying: "I am sorry about this thing, and have given command that never a prætor shall have jurisdiction concerning thee about it. And for him that made the conspiracy, I will see him punished. Fear not: thou art my friend."

But if ever Sarcogenes or other man were punished for this offense, no news thereof came to the ears of Simon. And Simon knew that Defectus would keep his word.

Simon also feared his servant, Conatus. Though he loved that man and had seen him fight manfully, yet feared the Master him. For he said in his heart, "What do I really know concerning Conatus?"

He therefore went about to test his servant.

First he said unto him, "Conatus!"

"Thy wish, Lord."

"Wilt thou not guard me, O Conatus, on this night? For behold! I have many enemies. And now, of all my servants can I trust none, save only thee."

"I will endeavor, Master. But—should Cæsar himself come—"

"Thou couldest nothing do but awake me."

"Or his soldiers?"

"Even then also."

"Or the great Sarcogenes?"

"Thou couldst still nothing do but awake me. Yet have I many other enemies than these. With them thou mightest fight. One, of old, in far-off Cyrenaica, Trivialis is his name— Why dost thou

cough and turn away so? Him do I greatly fear. On a day, when not so much I am oppressed with business, I will hunt him from his hiding, and will have upon him a sure and thorough revenge."

"Thou wouldst not kill him, Master!"

"Thou art greatly alarmed—for such a man."

"I knew him—once."

"Thou!"

"He was a man of no worth, an idler, a trifler."

"Just so, a Mocker too, and a man of sudden violence."

"Not worthy thy metal or thy blow, Master—such a man."

"Where is that man now?"

"Trivialis?"

"Yea."

"Gone from earth, I wot. But there be a many left like him. He is as common as his very name, Master. Didst truly attempt to kill the whole tribe of him, Trivialis, thou wouldst need— But wouldst have me guard thee, Master?"

Took Simon him, and showed a room, the which he declared to be his most secret, yet it was not so. And he set his servant at the door, outside, to be for a watch and guard unto him.

But behold! he gave the man no weapon (for this he had reasons) and placed in his drink a potion that made him sleep.

When, then, the new servant was found slumbering, his master went to him, and shook him, and called him loudly into consciousness.

Said the Master, "O new servant, that wast to have been so faithful! Dost thou so protect me, and stand for a powerful ward between me and mine enemies?"

The man could only appear astonied, asking: "Have I slept? Have I slept?" He hung his head, and did weep and sob and cry aloud, "Ah woe is me! I had intended to be so faithful."

"And dost thou," asked his master, "admit thou wast sleeping?"

"I slept," acknowledged the man. "I truly slept. I am good for nothing whatever. Kill me and let all be past."

But the Jew said, "If thou dost indeed admit thy fault, and pretendest not that thou wast waking (which many a man would have done) then art thou at the very least honest, and I will try thee again."

He tried him on the next night, and sent unto him another servant, who endeavored to buy him with much gold, begging but for a chance to enter the room of the Master. But Conatus cast him, and bound him, and took him before the Master.

And on the third night, Simon himself slipped out of his sleeping-

chamber by a secret way, and being in disguise came round unto the sentry, and attempted to catch him unaware. But this he could not do. But Conatus fell upon him instead, and endeavored to bind him.

But this Conatus could not do, but was obliged to be himself bound.

Yet all the while he kept up a great noise and clatter. "Master! Master! A thief and assassin! O my Master! And I not able to get the better of him."

Saith the pretended assassin, "Thy Master can no wise come unto thee, for he is dead. By mine own hand hath he perished. But behold! tell me certain secrets he hath confided to thee, and I will reward thee richly. Deny me, and I give thee death."

Conatus, then, answered: "I have been of no avail at all. So it is well I should perish. Let me have the blade, and that quickly."

At this the Master stripped his disguise off, and cried: "O good and faithful watchman, see! I am thy master, even Simon, who did fear and suspect thee, for that he had so many enemies. But never again will he fear thy hand. Take thou, therefore, the blade which, hereafter, shall be for a defence both unto thee and unto me."

He gave him the blade.

And Conatus stood in the presence of his Master with head bowed and arms crossed over his breast (as was the way of slaves before masters). He said to Simon, "Let us go before the prætor. Lay thou there a charge of indebtedness against me—for I indeed am more beholden unto thee than thou canst ever know."

Simon thought that the man did mean only that he, Simon, had given unto his servant a shelter and the office of steward in his house. Yet still he marvelled. And he asked, "Wouldst thou truly be my slave?"

"So would I," quoth the servant. "For, in service to myself, I have been ever a failure. Therefore it is needful I should serve some other man. So, too, I may keep from sin."

"Knowest thou not that Jews have a proverb, 'Three kinds of men cause their own misfortunes: those who lend money without witnesses, those who are ruled by their wives, and those who go into slavery by their own will'?"

"I have no money to lend, Master; nor have I now a wife. I can therefore be but the third part of as big a fool as some men might. Am I not a better than the average?"

"Thou art witty withal. We shall be in time companions. Yet if thou choosest once again, I will take thee to the prætor."

"I choose again."

"And I cannot do without thee, O faithful servant. Let us go."

They came back from the prætor's, and Conatus was the slave of Simon of Cyrene. But Conatus was to have his own peculium (or private property) and, withal, the privilege of leaving his master's house whenever he would, and then of returning thereunto, if only he chose to do this.

Twice, not long thereafter, did Conatus leave Simon, attempting to make for himself newer ways. And twice he returned, saying: "Salvation is of the Jews. Let me therefore abide in the tent of Shem perpetually."

And Simon, on each occasion, was still without a steward, and Conatus became as his steward once more.

At the time of his second return, he passed (this new-old æditus) on the way to his duties in the farther places of the house, through the wide atrium, or hall of high court and stately audience. There, by the side of the water-clock, sate old Chronos, that giant slave with flowing beard, bald head, and well-worn scythe across one massive shoulder.

Quoth Conatus unto him (being gay because of his return): "Rejoice, O son of Uranus and Gaea. Doth time hang heavily upon thy shoulders? If so, then thou sittest not lightly on thyself, for thou thyself art Time."

But the antique slave, Chronos, did not so much as gaze at the jester. Nor did his pallid features display emotion, either indignation or shame. Like a slow, but inevitable, machine, his bloodless lips fell apart, crying: "Conticinium, conticinium! Awaken, all slaves! There is work for you to do: life is short, vicissitudinous, full of snares and dangers."

But Conatus gave no heed to Time's solemnity or warnings. The rather, he maketh a grimace, and crieth unto Chronos: "How is thy sister-wife, Rhea, and how [pointing down Time's mouth] are thy various children the which thou hast swallowed—Hestia, Demeter, Here, Hades, and Poseidon? Thou seemest so sad I believe thou hast an attack of indigestion." At this the steward pretended to let a great scythe fall, clapped both hands upon his stomach, and writhed earnestly. Whereat Chronos, at length overcome, dropped his scythe to the floor, and laughed till his tears started and the walls echoed again and again, and slaves ran in from distant courts to behold this unheard of matter, that Time himself should laugh.

And Simon the Master, standing on the stair which led by the side of the atrium up to the solemn library, held onto his jovial sides and shook with merriment.

Then went Conatus out among the slaves, and all did meet him gladly, saying: "We have missed thee, gentle steward, also thy happy ways. But, now thou art back amongst us, we will work for thee doubly hard."

Conatus said, "Let us work for the Master (and for that greater Master also) and love both him and Him and one another."

Simon, however, went on up the stair, and into his bibliotheca, where myriads of rolls lay, all inscribed and incased, then to a tiny room beyond, which was called the Zotheca, where were his choicest treasures among the scripts.

How familiar the house did seem, with its hallowed sense of the voice of Lampadephorus yet lingering about its walls. To the Jew it appeared that he himself must, on an olden time, have lived in the great mansion before, even in the very flesh and bones of Lampadephorus. "Verily," said he to himself, "I dwell in the tents of Javan, even as Conatus in the tents of Shem. O Lampadephorus, friend of other and better days, would thou wert present in body even now as thou art surely in spirit." He took a certain writing from its place, and kissed it tenderly, and set it back, and his eye grew moist for the sake of him who had written that roll, and then had come to degradation (in Cæsar's service) so to shameful death.

At the thought of death, Simon mused a little, then took forth a scroll of cheerfulness (meaning to read) and thrust it in his girdle, and went yet further into a still more secret room.

And he closed the door (which was iron-heavy) and double-bolted it, then closed over that another and still heavier, and bolted that tight in several places.

Then, having listened, he brought forth out of the wall a hidden drawer, labelled: "The Toys of Time"—for the contents of that drawer would, on a day of days (as each man knoweth) have to be laid aside, even as the little elephants and camels which, on an older season, his father's mocking steward, Trivialis, had made for his childish fingers in Cyrenaica.

He looked at the jewels until he panted. The sweat stood out upon his branded forehead, his eyes grew large and round and wholly devoid of motion, as were he staring at the gates of joy.

Then poured he out upon a table a glittering stream of these hardened colors from the rainbows of old hopes—colors which a man could verily take up between his fingers as they were handles of a sword.

Said Simon, "Thou, O Cæsar, hast thou a jurisdiction over these?

Let us see. Lands thou mightest take. Better it is, in a flight, to have my power and safety altogether concentrate and with me."

Then a thought came to him. There was, in the center of the drawer, a mighty vase, made of one single ruby, filled to the brim with pearls, each thereof the ransom of a great kingdom. In the center, atop, lay one bright margarite of a luster, shape, and magnitude, that all the world had never seen its like. Round that pearl had clustered (so said Mundus, he that had sold the pearl to Simon) a whole history of sin, greater indeed than the annals of many a nation.

Simon lifted the pearl to the light, and thought upon it. "Thy name is Salvation!" said he. He took out a dagger, and opened the flesh of his left forearm. And he set the margarite in the wound, and sewed the flesh up over the pearl, that ever, in case of a sudden, unforeseen attack, or imprisonment and search, there might yet be as a secret with him, in his own very flesh, the certain means of ransom or escape.

Then snatched he the rest of the jewels from his own impassioned gaze, and put them up quickly.

He went back into the zotheca, there, too, shut himself within.

Then said he, "Friend, Lampadephorus, I thank thee that thou hast informed me of thy measures for escape—the stair of a hundred steps and one; for I would truly know not a single way, but many. Let us see."

He went to a place where still one heathen statue remained from the old times of Lampadephorus, the statue of Pallas Athena. He pressed upon a spring above the goddess's heart, and the whole niche turned, and, with it, the pedestal and the statue. And Simon gazed forth and down—into darkness.

Then stepped he out of the room, as often he had done before in times of perplexity. And behold, there came up from the sewer (for unto that surreptitious passage did the stairway lead) such a stench of old corruption, that he drew quickly back, pressed again the spring, and closed once more the detestable opening.

"Even yet I have not gone down," said Simon, "but it is well to know how."

He descended into the hall of audience, where now certain Attic tumblers were practicing that were wont to amuse him of a rainy day, and where there were also masks set upon the walls (after the Roman fashion) of Simon's ancestors (Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Aaron, but all of course hypothetic, being outpictured from the artist's imagination alone); and past old Chronos and his water-

clock, and by many a gorgeous, perfumed court, until he came to spaces far remote from the atrium, called the *viridarium.*

Now, in one of the courts of the viridarium, a gardener, at a time which Simon of Cyrene could not quite recall, had set up a number of sombre cypress trees, in an absolute geometric circle—emblem therefore not merely of death but of eternity as well. In the center of the great kuklos of darkling cypresses, was stretched and laid a little lilied pond, whose excellent smooth surface, like unto the placid human mind, reflected in a way the circle surrounding it. The pond was fed by secret springs, and thus was kept forever in a condition of the greatest clearness and purity. In the pond's center (for such had been the strange conceit of the old-time master of the gardens) had been placed a tiny horologe—*horologium solarium,* only that here amid the gloomy cypresses there was no sun—round whose excavated marble basin, and next outside the all-unnecessary marks for the supposedly succeeding hours, ran, but in lichen-covered letters, this curious inscription: "The tiny circle of the day hath here no value. Look, thoughtful guest (by which is meant the owner of this house) around thee; thou wilt comprehend, and (possibly) bethink thee how to die."

Simon entered the gloomy court in which stood the cycle of the cypresses, and paused for one brief moment to observe if truly he were in solitude. Far in the South, reaching high above the wall of the court, was a giant bank of slaty cloud. Ever and anon the lightning shot across the cloud, scrawling it over like a written scroll. And a muttering voice was heard in the cloud, like, as it were, to that old-time voice on Sinai. Far in the northern spaces of the blue was an eagle—only a majestic speck, but poised and militant and mighty.

Now, though he knew it not, the gates of the life of Simon of Cyrene were slowly a-turning, to close, at the appointed time, behind his soul forever. Yet he foreboded nothing, thinking all to be well. Such is the darkness lying on each human path that no one knoweth where his feet will lead. Darkness without measure or stint!

Into the gloomy cycle of the cypresses, as he had very often done in days gone by, passed Simon of Cyrene, and, placing himself within a seat of anciently rounded marble, gave himself wholly up unto solemn dreams concerning Adonai. But scarce had his reveries begun when, all at once, from the far distant atrium, came the sound of his olden slave which stood by the side of the water-clock—antique Chronos—calling in his changeless fashion the style and title of some unexpected hour. Unto the Jew it sounded like an echo of time ex-

ternal, which, somehow, had crept and wandered here into the bosom of internal time, otherwise called eternity.

He began to remember that the callings of his old slave, Chronos, had taken on of late an ever-increasing frequency of recurrence, and, in addition, an ever-enlarging import and solemnity. He believed that he, even Simon, might be growing old. There was, he knew, snow of years besprinkled on his temples, and blue-gray circles had begun to form about the dark centres of his eyes—symbols (he thought once again) of eternity—how strange that symbols of eternity should abound upon every hand! Thine eternity, O Jehovah, and I, thy priest, in the very midst thereof with thee!

Had he changed in his soul as little as in his body? People yet spake of "the unchanging Jew." But had he not in reality, deep down in the soul of him, changed, at least greatly altered? His hatred of the infamous cross, of Jesus also, had become much more intense. Yes, there could be no doubt at all about that. Now he recalled with a pang how much the eyes and voice of his good servant, Conatus, were like the eyes and the voice of Him of Calvary. But this he must say: Jesus had never been trivial, as Conatus was. Even he, Simon, would admit so much for Jesus. Why, he remembered that, on this very day, Conatus had made even Time laugh, as the latter sate by the silvern water-clock, calling off the inexorable hours. Yet Conatus's eyes—the pleading love, the sweet command! There was also in them a happy, more than loyal wish to be of loving service unto others. All these things were in his Conatus's eyes. Well enough, well enough! He would not hold anything as matter of rebuke against Conatus. Yet, but for the cross and Jesus—so he felt —his whole life would have been but a bright and beautiful tale. Now, oh God! was it wonder that he hated the cross? He remembered his fearful blasphemy at the foot of the hill, shuddered. Might a man be saved, ever, who had been guilty of such wrong? And of late there was always a certain agitation and turmoil in his soul, not wholly a fear of idolatry, and not wholly— He wondered how many of his servants were Christians. How many of the followers of Jesus were there now in Rome? Pah! what a leader had these in old Ophidion, that servant of the Snake. Christianity—was, in sooth, merely idolatry in yet another (and a worser) form.

Now Simon recalled a meeting of the Christians which, perforce and by accident, he had overheard in the house of Seneca, the moral philosopher. He had been at the dinner of a great man, Mundus—him from whom he had, in fact, later, obtained the pearl—and, at the close thereof, that senator, being frank with Attic wine and

inborn, low insolence, had said unto him, Simon: "Thou also art nobly born, as well as I, O Simon of Cyrene, for thou art truly a man of three letters." Thus was he, even Simon of Cyrene, priest of God, insulted with an ancient joke at his host's table. And, when the gifts to the guests were distributed, Simon (who received his present last of all) found it but a little wooden cross. "Thy fate" was writ thereupon.

Then he, the Jew, even Simon of Cyrene, had arisen, and, in despite of his granite resolve that he would not at any time vouchsafe liberties unto his too sharp tongue, had said to Mundus: "My people were priests and great philosophers or ere thy Romulus and Remus had sucked incurable savagery from a wolf." Then he had flung the cross in Mundus' face, and gone away high sorrowful.

And, coming from that place wherein he had supped and suffered, he had been assaulted both by servants of that Mundus and also of Ophidion, and taken to a certain secret chamber, where tortures were awaiting—strange wheels and curious tables, racks and spiked chairs, and white-hot irons and curious machineries unmentionable. And out of the lingering deaths of the torture chamber he had been brought forth and delivered, both by Philanthropos and also (if Seneca himself might be believed) by a certain Christopherus, and by them also that followed these two men, and also by the servants of Seneca.

And, stupid and dreamy from all his sufferings, he had been borne unto a distant room in Seneca's house, where he had abode in safety many days.

And while he had lain here on a couch, in his far remote cubiculum, it happened, on a first day of the week, that he discerned (at first) a little sound of sacred singing, as a synagogue were nigh. Then, soon, the hymn did cease, and a sweet reverend voice said to the unseen audience that there had come among them one who had studied many things and yet he believed. A great surgeon, a man of knowledge, faith, prayer and works. And his light was that of a star in a dark world.

And the man who had studied and yet believed, spake unto them, chiefly of how the prophecies of Scripture had been fulfilled both in Christ and in Simon of Cyrene. Then the heart of Simon had grown wild with anger at the association of his name with that of Christ. But a many had believed that day, confessing Jesus, and submitting to Christian baptism.

And the man sate on, amid his gloomy cypress trees and by the side of his sunless and unsunable sun-dial, giving himself ten thousand fearful martyrdoms: pricking himself with thoughts sharper

than Judean thorns, lashing himself with words heavier than Roman whips, lifting himself with sublime reminiscences, which, while they bore him aloft, yet tore and maimed and mangled him, like crosses. He recalled with especial pain that one of the Christians on that day had said that "Israel's Restoration" did not mean the restoral of the Land of Israel unto the Jew, to be as a material possession unto him, for, in the centuries and the millenaries, that Land might be restored indeed and retaken yet again a thousand thousand times, and still were it all as nothing. But Christ had made the restoration of Israel unto His shepherding when that He had, at Pentecost, in Jerusalem, set up forever his indefeasible church.

Now, while Simon pondered these matters, and with greater and greater bitterness, there began to sing, near by, at voluptuous intervals, a nightingale, and, deeper in the garden, another, responsive to its mate. Ever and anon were the two wholly silent for yet an even longer time, and, at such intervals, not far away, but vaguely distant in the unspeakable domicile of Ophidion (next door unto Simon of Cyrene's own now, so extensive had the house of each become)—the monotonous creak-creak, creak-creak, creak-creak, of some eternal treadmill, treaded and treaded and treaded by the suffering feet of a poor, recalcitrant slave.

As the songs of the nightingales died out completely, the sweet, soft air of the afternoon became as it were steeped in an ineffable sorrow. What madness! A slave to sentimentality and self-pity had he not become! Here and there a finger of solemn light was thrust in from the outer world, hesitant, shifting, inadequate but inquisitive, and a few moments later a beautiful butterfly came into the circle of the cypresses, and, alighting on the finger of the shadowless and never-to-be-shadowed dial, opened and closed its living and rejoiceful wings of white and scarlet, like a soul which had, at last, though not without the stains of sin, reached eternity.

Now, at this, Simon heard once more his old slave by the water-clock announcing (even so soon!) the progress of external time. "Evening draweth on: black night soon followeth. Yet, in eternity, it is high noon forever. Evening draweth on."

The darkness sifted down, the night grew soft, calm, and fragrant. The delicate scents of thyme waved to his nostrils—thyme, that holy herb, wont to be used at Jerusalem in the Temple of Adonai. In just what way was it there employed? He reflected for a long time. Strange he could not quite remember! What sort of Jew was this, what priest of God? Once more the creak-creak of the treadmill in the near, detestable court of Ophidion. Creak-creak, creak-creak! A

sudden burst of thunder sounded just above the court. Distant footsteps pattered, various slaves were making ready for the rain. Then again (so soon!) the sound of the old slave by the water-clock: "It is night, it is night! But joy cometh in the morning."

He arose and went about, muttering and alone, for all the splendid courts which he tramped were wholly silent now, save for the inward feeling of impending great thunder. And a sombre fear shook him to the heart, because he thought his loneliness a presentiment that, on a day, these courts should be indeed deserted. And he wandered about in them like a lion in the splendid ruins of forgotten palaces.

At length he whispered, "O God! the loneliness that is in my soul!—I will become— Yea, I will become—in spite of even *thee,* O God—a crypto-Jew!"

He began to hear servants calling (among them Conatus) "Simon, domine! Simon, domine!"

He followed the sounds of their voices, and came unto the servants. They said, "Thy brethren await thee."

He went to the atrium, found there Na-aph, the adulterer; Gannab, the thief; Keseel, the stupid one; Alukah, the horse-leech; and, holding himself aloof in vain pretentious praying, Parush, the separate and formalistic.

Simon gave them all sportulæ, the which they accepted gladly. Then Parush might have said unto Simon of Cyrene certain words concerning Berith, yet was that man so bound to his misadvising wife, even Thorah (which, by interpretation, meaneth "The Law") that he never would speak unto Simon even the words he might have spoke.

They began, first one and then another of the brethren, to berate the master of the house. Quoth they, "What kind of Jew art thou, O Simon of Cyrene? Hast thou not, these many long years, spoken aloud, even in the presence of the heathen, the unmentionable name? What a priest unto God! Can any one tell thee from a Gentile? When hast thou gone to the synagogue? Twice and three times monthly. Hast thou said the Kiddush for a whole year? Where art thou at Rosh ha-Shanah and Yom-Kippur? Dost thou believe that any amount of charities will purchase thy pardons as to all these things? And hast thou celebrated, of late, even the Hanuccah, the triumph of Judaism over idolatry?"

Simon of Cyrene hung his head, for he would not dispute with his brethren. Moreover, there was still in his heart the will to become a crypto-Jew.

"Dost thou not even associate familiarly with Christians, the ref-

use of idolaters? It is even said that many do not know thee from a Christian, and more each day thy ways are like theirs. Especially this Conatus hath upon thee—"

But Simon would hear them in nothing against Conatus. He took them and feasted them all (for he loved his brethren, spite of their transgressions) and returned them to their homes with yet more heavy gifts. But his heart was bitter.

There came the annunciator, and said: "Thy sons, both Cheerfulness and Joy, do await thee at thy gate. They stand by the side of Christopherus and Nea Diatheka. Long have they been a-seeking. Shall I let them in?"

Simon thundered, "No. By the God of the Temple, no. Ten thousand times ten thousand times, I say to thee, No. For I, shall I fellowship idolaters, and take as my sons the followers of Christ?"

The annunciator fled, and went to the door with the message.

There the sons of Simon and Amahnah wept.

And they came each day for many days, and Christopherus and Nea Diatheka often with them. But never the doors of Simon of Cyrene opened unto any of these. And often, because discouraged, they grew negligent for whole long periods, and came not.

And Conatus, because of timidity, did not at any time seek to gather together the Christians of the house of Simon for service and for prayer within that house. Yet, because of the freedom which all the servants had, both they and Conatus did often meet in another portion of the city. And they were greatly encouraged and edified both by Christopherus and also by Cheerfulness and Joy.

And the house of Simon of Cyrene prospered, in part because of the humble Conatus, who ruled with gentleness and love, and who knew not night from day in his toil for both the Master and the servants. He was no longer the mere mocker and trivial profaner whom the Jew in far off Cyrenaica had chidden and chidden yet again—and all in vain. But there played in his happy eyes the divine light of them who live most joyfully for others, and would die for them as joyfully.

About this time, at the suggestion of Conatus, Simon began to give his charities not only unto them in the Regio Judeorum, but also unto any and all that were anywhere in the city, needing raiment or bread. After a time, he sent out emissaries, who sought for the poor in distant lands, whether sons of Shem, or sons of Ham, or sons of Japhet.

And Conatus was always, in his fervent and persistent praying which he made each night in his solitary cubiculum, asking for

"the wonderful thing," as he called it—the most wonderful thing that can happen unto any man—to occur to his master. His eyes grew wistful with the praying and the waiting, wistful and ofttimes sad. Yet did he never cease to pray.

Sometimes he attempted to speak as about this thing unto his master. But as he drew anigh the subject, he stammered, cast down his eyes to the ground, and became confused, and went off to speaking (as his master perceived clearly) about some other affair than that whereof, at first, he would have spoken.

Therefore, to make his servant the more at ease, also to hide his own eternally ineradicable Judaism, Simon of Cyrene spake unto Conatus about skepticism.

And Conatus, humble and fearful and confused, would say: "True, Master. True, Master." And try yet again to talk, and yet again fail.

Simon in his heart was gratified, for he said: "If the man but keep the Maxims of the Sons of Noah, need I endeavor to proselytize? I would only offend a most excellent servant. Let his religion be as it may. Moreover, I will not speak out concerning Adonai (in whom I still fully believe) even to these that are mine own servants in mine own house. For they, as well as I, can find Adonai out, if they will."

Now it was curious that, at this very time, Simon of Cyrene was reading many a skeptical philosopher, in whom he verily thought he believed—Lucretius and Aristotle and Academicians of the skeptic school. He said to himself, "I am wholly a skeptic." Yet, all the while, he was truly planning to become a crypto-Jew, to set up glorious idols in his house, that the Romans might thereby think he worshipped Cæsar, though, as he said in his soul, he would "worship only thee, Adonai."

And still the house of Simon continued to prosper, in part because of Conatus the steward. But Conatus and his master remained as strangers, for this that they knew not God together.

And the life of Simon the wealthy, was ever a curious thing, even as Betah and Jeezer had prophesied. He had no ease, and there was no rest for the sole of his foot. Yea, though he possessed innumerable habitations, he was still as a wanderer, for his life hung ever in doubt before him; he feared night and day and had none assurance of his life. In the morning he said, Would God it were even! and at even he said, Would God it were morning again, for the fear of his heart which he feared and the sight of his eyes which he saw.

CHAPTER XLV

Between Two Stools

In those days became Simon of Cyrene a crypto-Jew. He still believed upon Adonai, but he set up in his halls the statues of Jupiter and Juno (for did he not require the countenances of the great?); Minerva, the goddess of wisdom (and who so much in need of wisdom as a snare-encircled Jew?); Vesta, the goddess of fire (whose flames tried out the bright gold from the ore); Ceres, she of the corn and of husbandry (whose profits were sooner or later in Simon's own tills); and Neptune, god of the seas (the seas, upon whose waters rode his innumerable, rich ships); and Venus (let love and beauty still increase, that expenditures and profits may be greater); Vulcan, her husband, blacksmith to the gods, who forged in winter the thunderbolts which great Jupiter, vindictive and unafraid of mortals, cast in the pleasant summer time (but let no Jew be stricken by the lightning): lame was Vulcan, lame and a cuckold (as seldom a Jew had been) and ridiculous; Mars, the fierce god of war, riding in a chariot, strong, and holding tight his spear (especially hateful unto Jews was Mars); then Diana, goddess of the woods and the chase (might the profits on the furs and the timbers be also unto him, the Hebrew); next Mercury, the patron of merchants and of gain: winged sandals, or *talaria,* were upon his feet (for promptness was important in business), while a *caduceus,* or wand entwined with wisest serpents, was holden in his hand, and he bore a purse, *marsupium;* last of all the greater twelve of the Roman gods, was Apollo, which had been specially loved of Lampadephorus (and, after him, of Simon): god of music and of poetry and of painting was Apollo; and of medicine likewise, and all the finer and better arts. Praise unto all these gods of Rome, but especially unto Mercury and Apollo.

And all these "greater" (they that the Romans called "celestial") deities he set up in his atrium, and certain of the lesser deities also set he up, for ensamples, Plutus, god of riches (Ceres' son) and Saturn, the god of time, he that was shown as a snake eating eternally his own futile tail. And this the Jew set up beside old Chronos and his water-clock of silver.

And just inside the atrium door, he erected, greater than all the celestial gods combined—Cæsar, the Lord of the Whole World.

He set up also, in his minor courts, innumerable statues of the lesser gods—Janus, the god of the year; Pluto, king of Hell; the Fates; the Furies; Somnus, or sleep; Bacchus Corniger, attended by

Silenus his nurse; Luna, the moon, and Sol, the sun; and Hercules; and his own Genius—of which each man—according to the Romans —hath one only.

And there were other gods also. But in each of the courts of Simon was either a bust or a statue of Cæsar.

Simon, in his heart, despised the gods, Cæsar most of all. He said, "O Adonai, thou knowest! thou knowest! But for these, and the silence which I have set as a seal upon my lips, I should go to the gates of Hades and be as nothing. Therefore have I done these things. But behold! I will stand high charitable to all men, and I will make new deserts to prosper, new caravans to wind, and the world shall be far happier even for this, that I am in it. Therefore forgive." Yet his heart was afraid and his knees trembled, because he had set up the images. He believed not upon them, yet he feared and feared the very appearance of idolatry.

And they that beheld the statues in the house of Simon, reported quickly the things they had seen. And they told Cæsar.

Hence, on a day (even as Simon was feeling in the flesh of his arm for the pearl of great price which in it he had buried) there came to the house of Simon a messenger from Cæsar.

Who handed unto him a scroll.

And Simon, taking the scroll, and breaking the seal thereof, read: "I, even Cæsar, do hereby make thee a knight. Thou hast been high serviceable unto me. I may later cause that thou shalt be a senator."

Then wrote Simon a grateful answer, and gave it unto the messenger, and despatched him with it.

But still did Simon fear. And he felt in the flesh of his arm again for his great pearl. And, finding it, was more content.

For behold! it had come to pass that, in his highest happiness, the man was most afraid, inasmuch as, because of the great vicissitudes of his years, he had come to believe in his soul that happiness did not of right belong to him, Simon of Cyrene. Even the laughter of his slaves, as well as of himself, was tinged now and again with a wholly tragic fear.

About this time Conatus was greatly care-burdened for his master. He came therefore unto him, and said: "Master, among the slaves (who know everything, but will not always tell exactly how they have learned) it is fearfully whispered that our Master is to go into exile. It is also whispered that he is, instead, to be secretly assassinated. What will be the outcome? Is there, O Master, anything afoot at all?"

But Simon only smiled, saying: "Who knoweth? Adonai."

Then when Conatus perceived that his master was not of a truth heathen, but was at the least a crypto-Jew, he said: "O Master, I want to say to thee—I think—I think— I cannot tell what I think. I am without 'expression.' There are deeps within me—slave as I am—there are deeps—and within thee too, O Master, there are deeps, into the which I fear—I fear—to be saying— I think—I think that I dream impossibilities. The wonderful thing! The wonderful thing, O Master! Would it might happen!"

Simon thereupon looked at Conatus with round, bright eyes. "What wonderful thing, O faithful servant?"

"Master, Master! Speak to me, I pray thee, about thy prophets."

Thought Simon, "I have said in my soul that never a word of my prophets or of Adonai would I speak to any one again. But, as concerneth the speaking to Conatus, what doth it matter?" He spake therefore unto his servant long about the olden prophets, the greater and the less, but chiefly of how those men had prophesied concerning the Messiah.

When he had finished, asked Conatus: "And thou lookest still, O Master, for the coming of Messiah?"

"I look."

Conatus closed his eyes, as if listening to an inward voice. Then, in a much lower tone than theretofore, he asked: "Master, may I go into my private room?"

"Yea, indeed, Conatus."

The man left, and prayed.

But Simon passed to the Forum, where he still was accustomed to transact much business, especially in company with his olden friends, Nummus and Praesens Pecunia.

Nummus said unto him, "Seest thou not that on us the ends of the world are come? Things get worse daily. The universe is rotten to the core, and will fall asunder."

Praesens Pecunia said, "Discord groweth continually. There is disaffection in the army, centurions are murdered in the night. Treason is discovered in the palace of Cæsar. The Temple of Saturn is robbed, and the custodian murdered out of revenge upon the State.—But Cæsar himself! Look where he cometh!"

Then came Cæsar in his litter straightway unto the Jew, and got out of the litter on purpose that he might kiss the Jew before the multitude. Then gat he him back into the litter, and left the Forum, flinging sweet words behind for the Jew only. And great crowds

gathered round Simon of Cyrene, for, as it seemed to them, he had forever overcome his chief adversary, which was Ophidion.

But, at the close of the afternoon (for it was winter now, and trading was mostly in the latter portion of the day) when Simon was quitting the Forum with great gain, and his litter (only less splendid than that of Cæsar) had come, then there stepped up beside him a *viator,* one of the officers of Cæsar, Lord of All this World, and by whom arrests are made, and saith unto him with a mock: "Thy pardon, sacred Jew."

He gave Simon a writing from the prefect which Simon read, then gat into his litter with it. And turning in the litter, the Jew beheld himself alone in the midst of the Forum, Nummus and Praesens Pecunia being last to leave him. But these also at length departed, and there were now beside him only his own slaves—they that might not choose to go away. A flood of red light from the setting sun fell like a baptism of blood into the marble gulley of the Roman Forum. Then, by a strangely sudden association of ideas, Simon of Cyrene remembered that night outside the walls of old Jerusalem, when the Nazarene (who had lately been attended by an acclaiming multitude) had suddenly been deserted, and the lurid lights of hunting Roman torches filled the desolate valley of Jehosaphat. "Thy Gethsemane, my Forum! Cæsar against us both! But who is to bear the cross for *me,* thou Crucified One?"

And when Simon had come into his own home—for as such he still did think of it—he ran quickly up into his bibliotheca, or library, then farther on into that little zotheca wherein most he loved to spend his solitude, whether in hope or in despair.

Then cried he aloud, "And thy kiss, O Cæsar, it was like the kiss of a snake—or that of Iscariot. Well, I do know thee now. And on such and such a day (as thy writing saith) I will present my lately knighted person to the prefect, in the Basilica Julia, there to undergo trial—and for treason unto thee."

For a time he could not wholly realize, or comprehend, the meaning and import of his strangely sudden arrest. Then he beheld the mockery of the affair. Little by little there dawned upon his mind also the terrible significance of his trial which was to be before the prefect. For the space of a dozen heartbeats he saw himself in the Mines of the Wretched: heard the click on click of multitudes of hammers and chisels, beheld the crowds of naked and melancholy slaves coming from darkness and disappearing back into darkness again: and all the pent-up wretchedness of the place! Then the roar of the landslide, the blinding entry of the light—

He recalled his wanderings, so filled with suffering and lonesomeness, his meeting with the sweet follower of Christ, his friendship with that gentle spirit for a time, the quarrel at the cross, the parting. "Ah me! that parting eternal! Thou little knowest, O Christopherus, gentlest of all idolaters, and like, much, unto Lampadephorus — Why couldst thou not have been a Jew?"

After a little walking about, he recalled again his rough journey—that journey which he had had after leaving Christopherus, the strange, one-ideaed people whom he had met upon that journey—Superbus and Superbia, with their foolish ancestry, full of nothing; Avaritius of the supernumerary fingers, who lived in but a single apartment of his house; Luxurius, and his sister, fond of enticement, with whom he, even the Jew, had braken wedlock; Invidus and Invida, they who, in the town of Natura Humana, had loved him dearly until they beheld him prosperous; Gula, that had had no appetite save when he saw his fellow creatures starving; also Accidius, the slothful, and the ever-scolding Ira. Then the castle of Levitas came back to him as it were in a dream, and all its pitiable follies, his own sudden imprisonment, the release because of the justice of one man alone, even Grammaticus. Then the journey into Germania Barbara. After that, the road to Rome—the first day in The City! Ah me, the exultation and despair, the injustices, the victories— But now!

He saw with preternatural clearness the possible consequences of this trial, nor would he in any wise seek to blind himself as thereunto. He began to feel once more a strange homesickness for the Land, the land that the Lord had given to his fathers, even Canaan! Why had he not returned unto that land long ago? Should he not have been happier? Should he not have been as safe? Was he not likely, even now, before the very eyes of Cæsar, to be sent to the Mines again, else nailed to a cross?

Came at this moment a cry from the tumblers in the atrium, "The temple of Jupiter is stricken! The temple of Jupiter—a thunderbolt!"

Then cried Simon softly, in his lone zotheca: "The temple of Jupiter—thy bolt, O Jehovah! And this shall be as a sign unto me, though I am not a believer on any signs. Ah! Thou Sarcogenes, great Christian as thou art, and son of the old Devil, if I do defeat thee this one time, then, at last, I will take upon thee a great revenge. Too long have I deferred it. We shall see. And I will quit me like a man upon my trial. I will be mine own advocate, even as thou, Sarcogenes, art ever thine. For who is this Ophidion, but a man, that he should certainly triumph over me? Let calculation, coolest calcula-

tion, be my guide. I will bridle my tongue, O Jehovah, not speak out at all concerning thee. For who are the heathen that I should speak out for them, and perish for their sakes? And who am I that I should proselytize unto thee, O Jehovah—I, but a worm in the dust? Canst thou not, if thou wilt, O Jehovah, and easily, convert— And emotion shall never rule me, but intellect alone. Come then, O trial! Let us go before the prefectus, thou and I, Ophidion. Let us go before Justus, and test our strengths together in the presence of the court and the world. Stand thou by me, O thou Lord of Abraham, and give me a mighty cunning in my tongue, for I shall need it on that day."

Now, in the courts of Simon of Cyrene, the servants said, with bated voices: "Our Master is under arrest."

"Sarcogenes, erstwhile Ophidion, hath done this: he is a great gourmand." So said the chief of the bakers.

"It is true," said one of the sculptors, he that was making an image of Vita Longa for the Master's library. "I liked not the man, Sarcogenes, from the day I observed that his hair and his eyes matched not."

Then said Musculosus, one of the grossest of the slaves which turned the hand-mills and ground the flour for Simon's *familia*: "He seemeth ever so sad, our Master. When he laugheth he seemeth saddest of all times, so that, once, when I beheld his lips a-smiling, I but chanced to gaze into his eyes, and lo! then saw I that these were so deep melancholy with private grief that I became ashamed I had looked into them. He, the Master, observing my confusion, said: 'Musculosus, why seemest thou confused so?' I could but answer the Master the truth, being confounded. I said: 'Because thine eyes, O Master, are terrible in their sadness.' Then saith he unto me, 'Thou knowest it not, O Musculosus, but I have been (and yet am) more of a slave than thou.' And he would have said more, but, methought, he could not. And I have often believed that he wished (but was not able) to tell me that all of the sadness in his life had a-grown out of this one very thing, that, on a certain day, he had borne the cross—"

"Come, hurry up," cried the master of the tables, as he entered the court. "Each man unto his own task. To it, O asses."

"Now what's the matter?"

"What do ye stand for, cooks? Be off at once, and see to the great cooking."

"But what is the matter?"

"Set up the tables in the new triclinium—there where all the later gods are—they will soon be here."

"The gods?"

"No, fool; not the gods, but the company. Hurry! Hast not heard? The Master giveth on this day a feast. In honor of Seneca, the moral philosopher, giveth he it."

"Then let us hurry indeed! Go, some this way and some that."

"But not too swiftly either. Have ye not learned how haste maketh—"

"But why were we not told before that a feast cometh on this day?"

"Yea, answer us that."

"How can *I* tell? How can *any* of us tell until Conatus—"

"Anyway, feasts and visitors are rare enough here."

"Our Master is a friend of Cæsar."

"Yea, he *is* a friend."

"But is Cæsar a friend of our Master?"

"Yea, the same kind of friend—hurry up, ye scrubbers of the pavement, yonder!—as a hand is which taketh a sponge, and, letting it suck its fill—hurry up, tablers—of golden water, taketh it then, and holdeth it over his own treasure-chest, and—"

"Squeezeth it liberally."

"Ye do say right: squeezeth it liberally."

"But ever the sponge is ready—"

"And hath good store of golden water in him at each and any several moment—"

"Hush, fool!"

"Why 'hush'?"

"Conatus!"

"It *is* Conatus!"

Conatus came. Giving all most excellent words and tender smiles, he said unto them: "There will not be any feast. Seneca, the moral philosopher, hath sent his regrets, saying Cæsar hath invited him instead. Hence he goeth up today to feast with Cæsar."

"Will Seneca come tomorrow?" asked one of the boy slaves.

Conatus reflected, and all the crowd were silent. Then said he, "Seneca will not come tomorrow; no, nor the day after. Yet he liveth and will prosper for a long time."

All the servants remained a good while silent.

Then some laughed, and one or two sobbed. But Conatus went into his private chamber. There he knelt and prayed fervently.

CHAPTER XLVI

Life Eternal

Now it was just about the time of the Roman Saturnalia (that period of the year when slaves were given their liberties for a week that they might be free in as great license as their masters) when the trial of Simon of Cyrene also drew a-nigh. A storm seemed ever impending. The weather, spite of the nearness of the winter solstice, was sultry, and men grew irascible. Frequent brawls took place in the streets and open spaces of the city, and in many a court the servants of great men quarrelled and fought, and their masters, behind drawn curtains, did deeds of greater darkness.

And, on that very day of days, but ere Simon had yet departed in fear and in trembling (yet also rejoicing because of his great strength) to the basilica wherein his trial was to be, he called unto him Conatus in the atrium, and said: "Where I go, ye may not be also. From the foundations it hath been ordained. Moreover, the time of the Saturnalia approacheth. Hie thee, therefore, out of mine insula, and get thee whithersoever thou wilt. Life is hard for thee, for everyone. Such pleasure be unto thee, therefore, as is possible or ere the end which soon cometh unto all shall reach even thee, O light of heart but overweary." He motioned him not to speak, but to be gone.

Said Conatus, "But I will speak. Thou goest to thy trial, it may be death. And I, O Master, have been remiss unto thee, not by any means a good servant. For behold, there was always—there was always—a thing of which I ought—to have spoken— Ah, Master! I have no more tongue than face." He stood in the fashion of slaves, and could not in any wise continue.

His master therefore pitied him. He stroked his hair, as was the way with masters in those times, whensoever they were specially pleased with their servants.

"Thou art much o'erwatched," said Simon, "and dost imagine ridiculous things." At this, he, looking up suddenly, cried aloud: "What was that?"

"Naught heard I," answered the steward. Then again: "The water is exhausted from the uppermost jar of the water-clock, and, with a gurgling sound, it starteth running from the nearest under-vessel." Then the old slave that was sitting by the clock moaned, as he were a mere machine unmindful of the meaning of his solemn

words: "Be true, O all, be true! O all! That time shall come when time shall be no more."

Saith Simon to Conatus, "Heard ye not yet another voice, one which saith unto me: 'And when I am through with thee, I will break thee, and yet keep thee'?"

Conatus turned aside, and departed, weeping, to his room, while his Master, still in the atrium, said to himself: "Oh my soul, my soul! What is this that hath come over thee? Why, in these latter days, have I forgotten to hunt the mongrel, Trivialis, even as I once did promise me I would do, meaning to take sweet revenge? And lately I care not for revenges any more. Ever it runneth in my heart that any man upon which I might be revenged could have been my brother. An eye for an eye— No, no! Can I cause suffering and not suffer therewith? The deed cometh ever back to the doer, even as love cometh home eternally and bringeth again with it— Ah, poor Conatus, I may be, on a day, as stuttering, as unconvincing, as ineloquent, as thou art. Pray God, not upon this trial. Pray— But I must behold again mine other servants—they too are precious unto me—ere I do go."

He went out into the farthest courts where the revelry was of the Saturnalia, a feast held in honor of Saturnus, which is also Chronos, or Time, first of the kings of Rome. And lo, the men and the women were a-drunken together and calling upon the name of Saturnus. Most had cast their garments off, a many had fought, two or three of the men were dead and one woman.

And Simon departed for his trial, being helpless in both matters.

Meanwhile, in the Forum, a multitude of commoner folk had gathered together, as it were with a mighty and common impulse. And Defectus, who was one of these, said unto Vulgus and Mobilis, his boon companions: "Glad to see you. Whither are ye bound?"

Say they: "To the Basilica, where Simon of Cyrene standeth upon trial this day."

Defectus: "I go thither also, and I hope we shall joyfully hear the prefect send that villain to the cross. I am of them that have secretly imparted information."

"Unto the cross will Simon surely go," quoth Mobilis, "and that most deservedly."

"Else to the mines," put in Vulgus. I think—" Now there came out of a clear sky a burst of thunder which rolled far away to the eastward. Defectus saith, "Let us hurry: we may get no place at the trial."

But he became separate from his friends, owing to the press, and

so went on into the Basilica as best he could. And there he climbed upon the pedestal of Jove's great statue, and looked out over the writhing sea of faces.

And the prefect came, whose name was Justus, and sate upon the high tribunal. Then appeared, tall, dark and majestic, the Accuser, Sarcogenes. After him, Simon of Cyrene.

Simon went and sate in the place among the subsellia appointed for criminals to sit in. Then opened the prefect the court. The judgment was set, the books brought.

But hardly had the prefect declared, "Let now the delation be read in the case of the World against Simon the Jew," when there arose a sudden cry of many loud voices: "Cæsar! Cæsar! Lord of All the World!"

And behold, from a side door, entered Cæsar. The multitude cried again, as it were a single speech of adoration: "Hail! Cæsar! Jupiter! Greatest of all the gods! See! We bow before thee, grovel in thy dust! Hail! Cæsar Omnipotens! We are wholly thine, Divinity!"

And Cæsar removed the cause from the hands of Justus, and sent Justus away.

And Justus went forth even from out the building and the very purlieus thereof.

Then said in his heart Defectus, "I thank thee, Mercury, even for this, that Cæsar hath taken up the case of Simon of Cyrene into his own hands. For now will Simon the Jew (whom I so envy) receive the punishment which I myself would long ago have inflicted upon him, had I been able. The cross! The mines!"

. . . . . And Conatus, on his part, when he had left his Master's domus, went forth in the streets and lanes of Rome, high sorrowful.

He passed a certain wineshop, and said: "Not in there."

And he passed another wineshop, but again he said: "Not in there."

And again, "Not in there, either."

For the man was aware of his weakness, and would not deliver himself unto temptation.

He came down past the cells of many harlots which were in the walls of the Circus Maximus. But again he said, "Not in there, neither."

And coming round through the Forum Boarium, and into the Street of The Travellers, he saw again a certain wineshop whence came the sounds of hilarity. He said, "This noise is what I need. And what does it matter that I go in, if truly I, being careful, do not drink?"

So he went in, and a man came up to him and said: "Let me show thee how, lately, I was robbed."

Said Conatus, "Show me."

The man said, "As I stood in the street, a fellow came, saying, 'Let me show thee how, lately, I was robbed.' I said, 'Show me.' He said, 'Look, then, up at yonder housetop steadily for a time, and thou shalt be greatly surprised.' Wishing to be surprised, I looked, and he ran his hands about my clothing—thus, and thus, and thus, saying, all the while, 'Gaze steadily upon the housetop: thou shalt be surprised.' And when he had finished, he ran away—like this."

And the fellow also ran. Conatus himself was much surprised, for he found that all his money had been taken.

So he sate in the wineshop, but could not drink, for that he had no money.

And there came into the wineshop and sate down beside him one sadder even than himself, so that Conatus was afraid to say aught unto him, because of his excessive sorrow.

The man said, "Tell me thy name, I beseech thee."

Conatus answered and said unto him: "My name is Conatus, an Attempt, for that is all which I am or ever may be."

The other said, "Mine is Trochus, meaning 'Wheel.' I am a Greek. Seekest thou also for the secret of eternal life?"

Conatus answered, "What I seek, I seek."

Said Trochus, when he saw that the man did think he was being mocked: "Long have I sought the secret, and I find it not." He told Conatus of the way in which he had come to know there was such a thing as a secret of life eternal. "About this mystery I heard," said he, "from one Kot, an Egyptian, who had it in turn from Dulab, an Arab, and he from Hemurta, a Syrian, he also from a Phoenician, named Galgal, and he from Chark, the Persian so-called, and he, when travelling in the further Orient, had had it from Chakka, who had it from Cakra, who, in his turn, had received it out of the mouth of a Tibetan, Hkhvor. And the Tibetan had had it from the lips of a Chinaman, Chi Lun. And the man of Serica, or China, who dwelt not far from the *aggeres serium,* or limiting wall, and there by the borders of the infinite ocean (which washes the farthest East) had had it in his turn, from a certain Rota, a Roman out of Cyrenaica, who had had it from a Vectis, or Lever, who had had it, he knew not whence, having merely overheard it in a street in Cyrene."

And Rota had sought through many lands to find the secret, and gone so far as even to Serica, by the side of the infinite ocean which is

in the farthest East, and there had died, and never had learned the secret.

Then Chi Lun, who had had the question from the lips of Rota,[1] "What is the secret of eternal life," said this man unto himself, "The question hath come from the West, and so it must have its answer in that region."

And, like a man possessed, he set off westward, but perished on his journey. Yet not before he had given the question unto Hkhvor,[1] and he (before he died) unto Cakra,[1] and he unto Chakka,[1] and he unto Chark,[1] and he unto Galgal,[1] and he unto Hemurta,[1] and he unto Dulab,[1] and he unto Kot,[1] until at length the question did come to me—whose name is Trochus, which also doth mean 'a wheel.'

"And all the other men than I, Trochus, be dead that sought the answer to this question. For lo! they travelled long and wearily and were sore beset, and heavy of heart and without hope because they had never received any answer to that question which had troubled them so greatly.

"And now I have heard that Simon of Cyrene, here in Rome, a Jewish merchant and philosopher, can answer that great question. Therefore seek I him."

Said unto this man yet another that sate in the shop, "Simon of Cyrene is on trial this day, and for his life."

Conatus wept.

Questioned Trochus, "Is it even so?"

Said Conatus, "It is so. For I am the steward of his household, and I know the truth. But what can anyone do for my Master?"

Came unto Trochus the keeper of the shop, and said: "Set thy pileus straight on thy head, and come along with me. For I am a secret officer of the court, and would take thee to Philautia, Cæsar's wife, who hath also been greatly troubled by this question."

CHAPTER XLVII

The Infinite Assize

Said Cæsar to the Nations, in a voice which sounded like that of a devil from the mouth of a hippopotamus: "I thank you, my children, for your divine worship."

Then settled he his fatnesses on the high seat of justice, trying the while to look like an immortal and imperturbable god, but pulling at the pale fat bulged round his heavy throat, and puffing still with the high exertion of having entered the room.

[1] A wheel. The words are taken from various Oriental languages.

Said he, "As all of you—know—the temple of Jupiter—my temple indeed—hath this day been stricken, and lo! there are other signs and wonders of great dangers to the world. Therefore, today (as now and then our divinity doth) we will ourselves hear all important cases. Thereafter may the best of litigants back to their own mere prefects and projects. Who is this to be charged? Is this some ancient stink to be stirred up, or what? Where is the delator? Read."

Stood forthright Ophidion, the lean and tall and dark, and, wetting his thin lips with the tip of his small, sharp tongue, and looking at Cæsar with bright, metallic eyes, he said most calmly: "Lord God of all that is, even Cæsar, ruler of space and of time and of men's souls, I do bow down and worship thee. For who is like unto thee for glory, O Divine and Incomparable, and who for power and who for everlastingness? And also who am I that I should have the privilege of pleading before thee, Cæsar?"

"Thou hast the privilege we give all our subjects," said his Majesty calmly.

Drew Sarcogenes himself up like an archangel, and declared before the world: "Thou makest me to be proud, for thou hast given unto me Cæsar's countenance and a right to speak."

He paused for a time, as if he were weighing certain matters and were also determining to be very just as concerning them. And having wet again with his little lean tongue his thin lips, he made a general charge against Simon of Cyrene, wherein he impressed his fellow worldsmen mightily with the lack of every value in the Jew. Having done this, he settled to a list of specific charges, to wit:

"1. This Simon of Cyrene bore the cross for Christ, the great enemy, O Cæsar, of thy dominion." Hereat did Cæsar frown mightily.

"2. He worshippeth clouds and thunder.[1]

"3. He adoreth an ass's head.[1]

"4. He worshippeth swine, therefore will not eat of a swine's flesh.[1]

"5. But he eateth the flesh of human beings.

"6. And useth the blood of a boy in his sacrificial rites.

"7. He cooketh and eateth annually a Greek, swearing hostility to Athens, center of learning.[1]

"8. He is a mere merchant only, caring for nothing but wealth.

"9. He is a skeptic, believing in no god.

[1] A common charge made by the Romans, in those days, against Jews.

"10. He believeth in one single God only, but that a god of vice.

"11. He is a man of three letters.

"12. He hath braken, unpardoned, and only by violence, out of the Mines of the Wretched—thy noble mines, O Cæsar.

"13. He hath been a wanderer upon the earth.

"14. He is a horse-leech, or usurer.

"15. He is a fool.

"16. He is a formalist, and even his co-religionists do hate him for that fact.

"17. He is a thief.

"18. He hath abandoned his own true wife, Berith, and left her to die of shipwreck.

"19. He hath peculiar views on time and space, eternity and matter—which do not compliment thy majesty much or make full allowance to thy holy divinity.

"20. But last and chiefest of the charges as against this man is this—he hath condemned our own gods utterly, most of all—thee. Thy pardon, O Cæsar, that I should so much as hint at the existence of this so great a crime. But thou knowest I do verily worship thee. Thy might and thy power and thy radiance are unto me as signs from heaven. Therefore take I this liberty [here he strode toward Simon, his face white and his eyes fixed fiercely on the man] of charging Simon of Cyrene with blasphemy against thy godhead."

He once more paused. The crowd watched Cæsar, Cæsar watched the crowd, each fearful lest it might offend the other. But, truly, there was little need for this, for the souls of the two—the crowd and of Cæsar—were in necessary harmony, each having made the other what it was.

Then, being at the close of his list of charges, Sarcogenes uttered a wonderful speech, whereby he wove a spell about the multitude, so that Cæsar, as he saw that this was so, was moved in turn: moved to laughter and to tears, to anger and also to bitter hate.

And Sarcogenes, he that was likewise Ophidion, wound up crying: "Even as Jesus (whose cross he bore) was tried for blasphemy at Jerusalem, so try I now this Simon of Cyrene for blasphemy in Rome and before all the world—blasphemy as against thee, O divine and everlasting Cæsar. Let the man of sacrilegium be adjudged."

And a great clap of thunder brake out again over the city, and flying clouds for a moment blackened the court of the Basilica. Then drops of rain splashed over faces and stones. Even a passionate, sudden gust of wind sprang up, tossed the leaves of the shrubs which grew in the marble niches of the walls, and flung the hair of Simon

of Cyrene about his shoulders. The statue of Mercury fell from its pedestal, and burst.

"Hast thou said thy say?" asked Cæsar.

"I have said it," declared Ophidion. But then, all at once, for that he was a very wily man, he quickly uprose again, and made a petition, saying: "I crave thy pardon, Lord of All the Universe, but here be certain pages which I did truly forget to read in this the delation which I have brought against the Jew. Suffer me now to read the delation over, that all the matters of charge against this man may be heard by the peoples and by thee."

But Cæsar knew well that his friend had omitted, and could, in fact, omit, nothing of charge as against Simon of Cyrene, but only desired to make the multitude believe that what he had said was but a portion of the whole indictment. Therefore said Cæsar unto him, "No, no! By mine own divinity! I will not treat this Simon of Cyrene with unfairness."

Then stood up Simon of Cyrene before Cæsar and before all the world.

And Simon heard in the Forum the sounds of gentle trade, but, in the street behind the Basilica, a great noise and shouts: "Bear ye your crosses! On! On to the Esquiline! On!" Then the crack of whips and piteous complaining. Till the day of the passing of time Simon of Cyrene never felt again so holden from a thing without.

And it pleased God to afflict His servant with nervous fears, for, in all the fiery trials which the Lord had called upon him hitherto to endure, he had never, as yet, suffered half the like of this. For he saw with preternatural clearness the consequences of this trial. According to the wise in which he should meet these complaints, the end for him would be either liberty and splendor, or ignominy, suffering, death. His tongue, therefore, clave to the roof of his mouth, and he looked out over the multitude.

But even as he looked and beheld, ranged round the walls, the mighty gods both of Egypt and of India, of Britain, of Gaul, and of Greece and of Rome, and even the war gods of Germania Barbara, and also the priests of every religion, and the peoples from every land, and men that he knew—Vulgus and Mobilis, Constans, Inconstans, Candidus, and Defectus, and likewise many another also, it seemed to him that, upon this trial, he was strangely freed from time and space, as if, indeed, he had stood up for his life before, all alone, even over against such an unplaced and dateless tribunal of world dominion, ten thousand times already—as if, too, he had felt this formless fear, the desolate aching at the heart, ten thousand times

ten thousand times. Oh Adonai! Why had not he, Simon, gone back to the Land of Israel when escaped from the Mines of the Wretched? O thou Land, thou Land!

And one in the press (whom Simon could not just then see, but he thought it Christopherus) cried out, "Speak, Simon of Cyrene, speak to the Nations, and speak truth."

Cæsar also adjured him saying: "By mine own divinity—ah-h-h! I wax fatter every day—I adjure thee to speak truth. Answer the charges of Ophidion. Tell us thy life. Call it forth out of the rotten storehouse of dead time, and make it to live before our eyes."

Then, as in a vision, the past opened its gates. And Simon of Cyrene, looking within, spake with his ageless mouth to all this world. And, as he spake, he, looking around, beheld the peoples that they were changed and yet not changed. And all the while he was keeping careful watch and ward—as it were a veritable seal of cautiousness—over his tongue.

And he upon whom the ends of the world had arrived and yet more also, said to Cæsar and the multitude: "Ye men of Rome—which is the world—and thou also, O Cæsar, the whole world's lord, give audience. If I am rude in speaking (and Ophidion hath declared me to be a merchant merely) and know not how to bend the voice and manner unto the thing expressed, yet will I say to you all the mere truth alone. Suffer ye this to make up for my trader-like deficiencies."

Here he paused for a considerable time, wondering what he should say next. Then he began again in an altogether different key, having grown bolder. "And, first of all," said he, "(for, O Cæsar, first of all it should be mentioned) about this charge that I do blaspheme against Cæsar and the other gods. Search ye mine insula, O ye Nations, and behold if, in all its courts, there be not many idols. Search ye again, and see if in each and every court there be not images of Cæsar. And always is Cæsar's image the finest and the largest."

Hereat, Cæsar grinned with a fatty delight, and the crowd cried: "Cæsar! Great is Cæsar! Greatest of all the gods! Cæsar is he!"

"Next, as to the charge that I am a merchant merely, reckless of all the rights of art." He stopped and made a little motion, as of one that weighed and counted coins. "Ye do know that, as to painting and to building and also to the making of fine images, I am not in any wise the equal of the Greeks, but who indeed can surpass in many matters? Yet, in music, I have written songs which all the world loveth, and, as to Germania Barbara, the best of her songs—as Krieg himself, the king thereof, hath declared unto me—

were made by me, even Simon.—But all further answers as to things like these, I leave for the mouths of others than myself. The world knoweth."

Then spake he for a time concerning Berith, the sweet rose of Sharon, whom he had well loved in his youth. And he showed that the shipwreck of this woman was not (as he supposed) in any wise or manner his own fault. And, when he had finished, the eyes of the peoples were bright with many tears.

"Then," said he, "as about the charges of my being a horse-leech, and a fool, and a formalist and thief, I know that many in this multitude believe indeed that I am all these things. And behold, it is true that certain of my nation can be charged with formalism, and with theft, with folly and with graspingness. But lo! I always have striven terribly that so it might not be. Ye lay on my shoulders the vices of these other men—my brethren." After a few beats of his heart, he told them: "As well charge Cæsar with the faults of brother musicians, though he himself doth play as never have played the divine fingers of Apollo."

In the crowd came a little stir. A voice cried, "Tell us thy life. Then can we soothly judge thee."

Cæsar turned in his curule chair, and saith, not unkindly: "Yea, tell us thy life. Yea, good Jew, say on."

"In brief," answered Simon of Cyrene. And he spake in a loud, clear voice that the peoples might all understand. Even as he spake, the head of the Monarch of all this World inclined softly toward him, listening, and the eyes of him that had read the delation, grew dark and wide and terrible with hate and unspeakable fear. And so much persecution had the man of Cyrenaica endured that he had contracted an almost habitual gesture, that, namely, of holding out before him a pair of supplicating hands—a gesture not unknown to fine and studied oratory, but, with him, become a matter of mere instinct and use. And so indeed he stood for the more part. Yet again he would lift his arms like great beams from his sides, and stand, as it were a human cross.

He made a little peroration, in which he pleaded both for justice (and where should any one go for justice but to the court of Cæsar) and for leniency on the part of all that, like himself, had wandered and suffered much. And the murmuring multitude became silent, even the walls—those marble walls set round with images of innumerable gods—ceased to echo and to complain, lest they, too, might miss some word about Jehovah, the one Lord God of the universe. Yet

spake Simon of Cyrene, with the voice of his own mouth, never a word as concerning Jehovah.

"Hearken!" cried he—this man who spake not merely unto Cæsar, but likewise unto many generations throughout space and time. "Hearken, O Cæsar! Hearken, ye peoples! And hearken to the tale of a simple trader, and of how it came about that he did begin to trade.

"Born was I in Cyrenaica. I was son to Shem and Shemaiah. And I am noble, and yet not noble, for, like each mere man, I have much that is twilit in mine ancestry. Among mere shepherds was I born—though my father was a noble among peoples of his kind—and I myself became a shepherd. Yet, amid the rocks and pastures of Pentapolis, seeing the caravans of trade go by daily—out of the desert into the city and out of the city back into the desert once more—there sprang up in me a great love of commerce—though, at that time, I knew not all my own soul.

"Become a youth, I quarrelled with my father's steward—quarrelled because I hated him, and because, in the human heart, there liveth ever a yearning of that beastly god, Revenge, after his own natural provender.

"On a day, I sinned. Even as hath every man and woman, by hand or by heart, so sinned I.

"I slew—rather, I thought I had slain—my father's steward."

"Why didst thou attempt to slay this man?" asked Cæsar.

Thereupon Simon trembled. Then he smiled at Cæsar, and, not withdrawing his eyes from his Majesty's orbs, said: "That man traduced the Lord of all this Universe."

Now, Cæsar in his heart believed that Simon of Cyrene, by "Lord of all this Universe," did mean himself, Cæsar. He, therefore, gave back to the Jew smile for smile, and said unto him: "Continue. Thou art a good man."

"I fled. And I hid me in the tomb of my father, and only came forth therefrom when I beheld a sunny-headed Greek, who, riding up toward me, led a whole caravan with song and laughter and with a bright torch. And with him I travelled far and learned much, for he taught me not like a master at school but like a father and a god."

"His name?" demanded Cæsar.

"Lampadephorus."

"Lampadephorus!" Hereat Cæsar tugged at the fat about his throat. Said he, "I knew that man." He made a motion as if dis-

carding a thing most precious. And he said, "It was wholly necessary—that I parted— Go on."

Simon spake of his days in Egypt, wherein Ophidion (now delator in this case) together with a certain woman of vile resort, did seek to defraud him of a locket. Then of a similar snare at Petra, again in old Canaan. But in all these matters spake Simon of Cyrene neither of religion nor of God.

Told he of his days in the belly of the ship, Babylonia, his return to Palestine, his marriage to that excellent woman of his own way and tribe, even Berith, or Amahnah.

Simon of Cyrene paused again. He would offend no one, neither Jew—no, nor Christian, nor any other idolater.

"I come," said he unto Cæsar, "I come—now I come—unto a day—unto a day of days—a day of which—of which I had rather by far not speak—but that the need thereof—that everything be expressed—"

Cæsar: "I bade thee say all."

Simon: "And all I will therefore say.—Upon that hour, O Cæsar, which seems to have been a turning-point in my whole life, a crest in the long hill, or mountain rather, of my history, as indeed in the lives of so many others— I know not why, but upon that day, which seems to have been so fateful, so full as one may say of great destiny, so big with fortune, of promise, of hate, of curses, also of such unparalleled love—upon that day—"

Cæsar: "Say on! Else a cross awaiteth thee."

Simon: "So did it on that day, O Cæsar, but in more meanings—"

Cæsar: "Yet thou livest!"

Simon: "After a fashion—differently."

Cæsar: "But on that day?"

Simon: "But on that day, as I chanced to be returning from the country, behold! a dusty multitude burst forth out of the Gate of the Gardens, and, in their midst, a man called Jesus. He, as it seems, was hateful to certain of our high people—unto the Romans as well. Therefore had He been condemned to death by crucifixion, and indeed He bare, though but faintly, His own cross. I, therefore, as I came anigh unto the multitude and unto Jesus, was laid hands upon. And me they compelled to carry the tree.

"Him, then, they crucified.

"But I, when the soul of the Man had departed, came down to the foot of the hill.

"And there I met, O Cæsar, this same man, mine Accuser on this day. On that day also was he mine Adversary. For that he did

falsely apprehend me and later falsely accuse me before Pilate and the world. Wherefore do I even until this very hour, upon my forehead, bear these three false letters. But this man was then called, not, indeed, 'Sarcogenes,' or 'He That is Born of the Flesh,' but 'Ophidion,' 'The Little Serpent.'"

Suddenly uprose the serpentine Sarcogenes, as he were again an archangel, crying: "It is a lie, a lie most damned."

In a shout of thunder the base denial was taken up and repeated by the innumerable voices of all the nations throughout the immeasurable basilica.

And Cæsar, when he had perceived that the nations stood, in this matter, on the part and side of his favorite, Sarcogenes, then he also stood on the side and part of that same man, saying: "Simon of Cyrene, why pervertest thou truth?"

But Simon saith unto him, "I pervert truth not. But he, Sarcogenes, that false Christian—"

"I Christian!" shouted then again the foaming and stately archangel. "I Christian!"

"Thou," answered Simon, "even thou. Thou hast a long time said thou wast a Christian. Wilt thou now deny it?"

Then the favorite of Cæsar, even Sarcogenes, when that he was so pressed, here before all the nations of the world, did basely deny, wholly repudiate, and forever reject Him that would gladly have been his savior, had but the Man of Wickedness so willed.

And the hall was silent, for many in that hall had heard Sarcogenes (in private) both acknowledge and declare Jesus' eternal sovereignty.

Said Cæsar, "I see we have the words of each of these two mighty men poised and weighing equally before us. I shall have to think."

Now Simon saw with unmistaking eye that he was not yet quite lost, if only he once again could reach the mind or touch the heart of Cæsar. He therefore sought for a way whereby to do this.

But the Man of Evil, Sarcogenes, with death raging in his soul, cried in a great voice:

"Cæsar! Let us put this matter to a test. What is the point and kernel of the day? Is it not as to whether or no this Simon of Cyrene is opposed and basely as unto thy godship? Is it not even so?"

Now Cæsar was greatly jealous of his godship. Therefore he gladly said, "Yea, it is even so."

"Then ask him," cried the infuriate one, "ask him here in the presence of thyself, and of myself also, and of all the priests of all

religions, and of all the philosophers, and of all the powers and mights, and kingdoms and principalities of this world, and of all its innumerable peoples, to say and to declare before them all, and for all time past and for all time to come, whether thou be or not be—Jehovah, the one Lord and God that he worshippeth alone."

Saith Cæsar, "That is fair. Say unto me, then, Simon of Cyrene, whether I, Cæsar, be or not be, him whom alone thou worshippest, even Jehovah."

As he finished asking, there came a marvelous silence in the hall. And the eyes of them that were there assembled were fixed and bright on Simon of Cyrene. But never, for a beat of time, did Simon remove his eyes from Cæsar's. For a while he thought he should have fallen dead. Then he heard the sounds of a great procession pressing onward in the Forum: "Way there, way! Way for the goods, wares and merchandises of Simon of Cyrene. Way! know ye not how great that man is?" And the noise of the city was like a marvelous faint tune to him, and still he could not take his eyes from Cæsar's. He felt that he was growing old and pallid, as if with the burden of a million years. He saw, or appeared to himself to see, in the back of the hall, the expectant faces of Demos (grown old also) and Mobilis and Vulgus, and that Defectus— He recalled again a certain advice which he had once given at his own sessions unto Defectus—"The success which is most difficult is the most certain. Thou leanest on old and merely mechanical contrivances. Seek to invent. Strive ever for new (and wanted) matters. Get thee especially that vigor and concentration of the mind which governs men and things."

"I am waiting!" saith Cæsar. "Am I Jehovah?"

Simon thought for a moment that he would have said unto the beast, "Yea, O Cæsar, thou art very God, the Jehovah whom I worship," but he had not hungered and thirsted for Adonai from his tenderest years to feel no anger at the royal questioning. So he only answered, "Thou art the Lord of Time and of Space and of Matter. Thou art indeed the lord of all these."

"But," cried again Sarcogenes, "ask him who is Lord of Eternity and the world which is yet to come—in which is neither matter, space, nor time—ask him if thou be not indeed Jehovah."

And Cæsar having asked—

Then the eyes of Simon of Cyrene grew large and round and deep. And, looking at Cæsar, but seeing eternity alone, and feeling a strange impulse run before his will, he shouted, as it were with the voice of Jehovah himself through the lips of a bright trumpet:

"Thou art not God. Thou art not even God's ape, but the ape of the Devil, the quintessence of the corruption and the iniquities of this world."

And Cæsar shrank in his curule chair, and shook as with ague.

The hall was tomb silent. Simon felt in his breast the thing which he had done, and said softly: "Lost! I am lost!" But Cæsar was also silent, for in his soul he knew very well who was the Lord of the World that was to come, and, though he feared Him less each day, and might on a time forget Him wholly, yet still he feared and still he shuddered—and still for a time spake not.

But that evil one, Sarcogenes, though he too, for a while, had trembled, quickly recovered his soul and countenance, and, with rage and death permeating his murderous heart, said, but sweetly: "I, O Cæsar, I say thou art Jehovah."

"I am beholden unto thee," acknowledged Cæsar, "for the truth." He sate up again, and might indeed have pronounced a fearful sentence against Simon of Cyrene—although there was in his heart a struggle between his imperial godship and his lingering fear of Jehovah—but that, at this very moment, there entered the room the partner of his soul, his queen and the mistress of all lands of earth, even Philautia, whose name, interpreted, meaneth, "Self-Love," or "Selfishness." She had just been talking with Trochus and the secret agent which had brought him unto her. In this way the long spoke words of Shem and Betah had, through a Lever and full many a wheel, wrought out, for the suffering Jew, at least temporary salvation.

She was a handsome woman, Philautia, in the full tide of life, clad in a regal robe like unto the stored up splendor of many hot fires—but under it showed another garment hued like ashes. And the multitude shouted: "Was ever woman so queenly made? Look on the high-arched nose, the brow of pride, the set, imperious mouth, the eyes of stern commanding. So great is Philautia that she seeth us not. Hail to Philautia, all hail!" And indeed her narrow eyes were strangely bright and immovable, always fixed on something little and quite near at hand. Just now she saw merely the watery orbs of her consort.

Going to Cæsar, she said in a voice like a spring bird's in the morning: "Cæsar! My love, my life!"

Cæsar turned and greeted her: "What wouldst thou? Sit down, my queen, my self."

Philautia sate by Cæsar and said, so softly that Simon of Cyrene rather knew her thought than caught her words: "The secret of

eternal life, thou knowest I long have sought it. Also thou, even as all men—though ofttimes they realize not the fact."

Said Cæsar, "I know."

Then said again Philautia, "There hath come to the palace in this very hour one that hath had a message from the farthest East. Even from the shore of the illimitable ocean, had he it. And he seeketh also this same life that we and all men seek. And he, from his messenger, hath learned that, even in this very Jew which is upon his trial, this Simon of Cyrene, abideth the secret we are seeking. 'Salvation is from the Jew,' saith he. Slay not him, therefore. Moreover, he is such a gainer of moneys unto thee as never in any wise could other mortal man become."

"As thou wouldest, O my heart," saith Cæsar. "Yet this one question I will ask him ere I release him—that is, for the day and hour—what thinketh he of Jesus?"

He said aloud to Simon, "Jew, I am half a notion I should release thee, at least for the nonce. Of course I ought to execute thee. But first say to me, This Jesus, this philosopher, this Jewish impostor—believest thou on Him?"

Simon of Cyrene was again greatly torn—partly because, of late, and chiefly on account of Conatus, there had grown up in his soul an immense love of Christ, also because, in that very soul, he was still son of Abraham, loving Adonai mightily and over-fearful lest he should yet give in unto certain things. Also, he still dreaded Cæsar. He, therefore, lifting his arms to a level with his shoulders, and gazing across the peoples, cried aloud—

"No, by God! Jesus was a great philosopher, but, to worship Him—that I consider idolatry."

He looked out once again over all the Peoples, and in another direction, and again shouted: "No, by God! Jesus was a great philosopher, but, to worship Him—that I consider idolatry."

And he looked yet once again across the earnest faces, and would again have shouted as before, but that he beheld, at only a little distance—Christopherus, whose eyes were full of shining tears for him, even Simon of Cyrene. Then Christopherus lowered his head, and, wrapping it up in his mantle, wept sore. Even as on that day when he and Simon had parted at the foot of the cross, so wept he again now.

And, when the Jew beheld his friend, that he was as he had seen him on that last occasion, when both they twain had come forth out of the Mines of Wretchedness, and then afterwards had hotly parted,

behold! the body of Simon of Cyrene, which had standen as a mighty rock, was shaken by ague.

And a strange impulse ran again before his will, so that he once more shouted all at once, as if still another time the spirit of the Lord had taken hold upon him, so that the people who stood in Cæsar's hall of judgment were terrified utterly: "No, by the Ancient of Days! He was neither impostor, nor mere philosopher, but Shiloh, the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God!"

Had it been his last word, he had pronounced it.

And when he had thus spoken, he groaned as he were indeed in mortal agony, and fell straight down at the foot of the column whereby he had standen.

And he leaped right up again, and parting the many people that ranked and filed before him, even as a husbandman parteth a field of standing wheat, he rushed forth out of the judgment hall, crying: "What is this that I have done? Oh what is this that I have done?"

And no one durst oppose him. Even until he had reached his own house, he was not opposed.

He rushed straight in, though Conatus would have stopped him but could not.

And when Conatus followed after, and found him in his zotheca, behold! his Master knew him not, but was like to a stranger pacing the familiar room.

And Conatus saw and heard the Master crying, "Eternal Justice blast you forever, O ye wicked! Perish the wolf-breed of the world, and only the sweet children of Abraham— When? Who is this? Have I not seen thee? Justice—Justice himself! Right glad am I to meet thee, thou clad in crimson. No soberer—There is blood upon thy hand, sirrah, hell in thine insane eye, death and eternal damnation—"

"Master! O Master!"

"Out, ass! Damnation! Death! Thou art Cæsar! Eternal crosses!"

"Master! Alas!"

"I fain would have Justice! Who is there? Why, there is Justice. Oh *there* he is. No, yonder. Yet, once again, he is here. Who art— Why thou art Simon, Simon of Cyrene, he that bore the cross for Christ. Come hither, Simon. Sit thou upon that, sirrah.

"Sirrah, I myself am Justice, and I will hold court this day. Poor injured Simon!"

"Why dost thou weep, Master? And why dost thou know me not?"

"Alas, sirrah, I will do thee justice, though the world burst all asunder—which, belike it will when Simon of Cyrene shall have justice.—Quick! It is my head that bursts! Christopherus! Lampadephorus! Adonai!

"I thank thee. I thank thee that thou sawest the thing needful. The throat—it is still too tight. Sell caravans in Persia. Put camels in Cyrenaica, instead of horses! I am Cæsar. Simon—once again—I—I try thy case— A sign! A sign, O Lord God! A sign from—Sit there. Now come all the world with lies against thee, who art—a Jew. Art thou not the husband of Amahnah? Deny it not. Fires, racks for the flesh! Adonai! Multitudes! The world! My thoughts seem living things with blood in them! Blood! Saved by blood! Who hindereth Justice? One on a cross? Who beareth the cross? Christ— No, Simon— No, it is the living Christ. A world of blood! Gentiles! Jews! Justice! Blood and justice! Saved! Lost! How carriest— No, no, no, no, no.—Give me an axe. Now follow me, thou Simon of Cyrene, and see what Justice doth."

He went raging, therefore, through his own house, knowing it not, about all the courts thereof, and brake his images, every one, but crying, at length: "The Christ, the Christ! Where is the image of Christ? Is there no image here of Jesus? What is the idolatry of idolatries? I will break that idol yet, and in the sight of all men."

He ran out into the *viæ* and the Forum, so to the Basilica Julia, wherein he had that day been tried.

Mounting the place whereon he had aforetime stood, he shouted with all his might: "It is I, even Simon of Cyrene, Jew of Jews and son of Abraham among sons of Abraham. By the Eternal of Eternals, and the God of all the gods, I did surely lie upon my trial in this court this day. For Jesus is not the Christ, the Son of the living God, but a mamzer and a loathing, and a stench in the nostrils of righteousness forever."

He leaped down out of the place, wild, and crying again and yet again, even until he had reached his own domus: "What is this that I have done? Oh! what is this that I have done?"

But few there were that had stood at the time within the great basilica, for the Justitium, or legal holiday because of the Saturnalia, had set in. And these, because of the echoes which there were all round about among the gods in the hollow hall heard not, but said, the one unto another: "Hast thou distinguished the man's words? What was that which the Jew would say?"

CHAPTER XLVIII

In Peril of Great Changes

Now, when Simon's trial was still fresh in the mind of him called Sarcogenes, that monster sate in a little wine-house of the city, a den disreputable. For so it suited this great, vile man to do. In such places he could hear about the conduct of the world as never a soul might learn of it in the courts of Cæsar. Furthermore, there was always a chance in such twilit spots, to put poison, here into one unsuspecting ear, there into another, which chances, elsewhere, he might not have had.

And Sarcogenes drank and drank again.

For he had come, in that hour, from the palace of Cæsar, wherein he had had conferences with the Lord of the World concerning the future worship which was to be accorded by the peoples to Cæsar's divinity. At this conference, the man Ophidion (for so now even he himself thought) had behaved badly. He had forgotten to flatter Cæsar, as the Ape of the Devil would have had himself to be flattered. This, the man that was born of the flesh told his own self plainly, was the direct consequence of the effect which Simon of Cyrene's speaking out upon the trial—speaking out, that is, both as about Jehovah and also as about Christ—had had upon even him, Sarcogenes, which was truly Ophidion, the lesser snake. Cæsar had said, "Thou, Sarcogenes, I consider as my friend. (Art thou not the master of the revels here?) Well, as friend and companion of thy Prince, thou art now confronted with this question, Whether thy Prince, even I, Cæsar, had better order and declare that, hereafter, all the sacrifices of all the world shall be made unto me, Cæsar, and in my name, and whether all the temples of all the world, save mine own only, should be abolished—or, at the very lightest, closed and again opened, but only in the name of Cæsar."

And Sarcogenes, because of the words of Simon of Cyrene, which still were sounding in his astonished ears, trembled and was afraid to say to Cæsar that which the Lord of All this World desired to hear. He advised therefore, instead: "Nay, Cæsar; I would not do this."

Then had Cæsar's gorge risen, and his lips cursed the curse that was in his heart.

But Ophidion (finished courtier that he was) corrected himself, saying unto Cæsar: "Thou didst not let me say my say out. I meant to have added that it were better to teach the peoples that all the other gods than thou are merely thine attributes. For, first of all,

this is literally true. And, second, the peoples will not then be offended (as otherwise they must of a certainty be) by the abolition of all their aforetime gods, to whom indeed they are greatly attached. Thirdly, they will, in that gradual wise, come without any offense, and without any insurrection, to look upon thee as the one god only. Then, later, thou canst, if thou wilt, and devoid of any trouble, abolish all other gods but thyself only."

And Cæsar was merely pleased in part—greatly to Ophidion's marvelling, for he had not perceived that, of late, Cæsar had grown more and more jealous of his godhead.

And Cæsar had thundered, "Wast thou, fool, in any wise affected by the outspeaking of the Jew?"

Sarcogenes sware that not in any wise had he been touched or shapen thereby. Yet verily, as he said the words, he shuddered. This was seen of Cæsar, whose eyes became narrow with hate.

Then had Cæsar dismissed Sarcogenes, who had forthwith come down to this dim wine-shop.

Therefore, as he pondered, he drank, and drank yet again. For he wished to forget the mistakes he had just made with Cæsar, yet still more the words which were ringing, each hour the more strongly, in his ears, and which Simon had spoken in the Court of Cæsar before him, Ophidion, and before Cæsar himself, and before all the gods and the priests and the nations of the world.

In such manner he became foolish, and talked of flies. But remembering who he was, and that, if he became too talkative, he might, on a day, be obliged to explain unto Cæsar, he arose, and cursed, and paid his reckoning, and left the caupona.

The shadows of the city were lengthening over the seven hills. He said, "I, like Simon of Cyrene, am very lonely: I am truly a lonely man." Yet, as he entered his own house, he went not out among the servants, but into a secret chamber, where, being all by himself, he felt not quite so solitary as he would have done among his own servants.

And having arrived here, he cried in a sudden agony: "Oh God! Oh God! How cruel even to the sinner is a life of sin! I believe in thee, O Jesus, and I tremble. Pity thou me." He paced the secret apartment for a little while, with hand over heart, whispering: "Courage, courage! It will all soon be over, and thou shalt be thyself again." Then he apostrophized, "Ah, Simon of Cyrene, hadst thou not been a crypto-Jew, hadst not pretended to be a worshipper of Cæsar and of gods lesser than he, then mightest thou surely have known again thy true wife, Berith. Or even— But thou hast had

thy choice.—Jehovah! Thou who livest out of space, and whose acts are wholly exempt from time and from time's tolls and secret revenges, behold there are other wills than thine. There is the Jew's. There is mine also."

He had just opened the false bottom of the box in which he kept his copy of the Scriptures, including the letters of Paul and of James, and others that had been written with a sacred pen. But there was also in the box "The Book of The Beast," in very many volumes, which had been sent unto him by Levitas, of Gaul, and which had been written by Porneius and Porneia, as well as by a far worser prostitute, Infidelitas. He took out certain of the sacred rolls (and not the others on this day) and kissed them, and started to read. But then he cast the parchments to the floor and trampled them. "What! Shall I throw myself upon mercy, though that of the Eternal? Shall I confess my sins? Where is my pride? Help thou me, Satanas. I pray unto thee. And curse thou all these scriptures, and all men which had to do with them, in especial Simon of Cyrene."

Yet, in that very moment wherein he cursed, had it happened that Simon of Cyrene came unto him, or the bearer of Christian light, Christopherus, he, even Sarcogenes, who was also Ophidion, might have confessed his sins, passing over unto Righteousness.

But so it was not ordained to be.

And Ophidion had heard the truth, ere now, times innumerable out of the mouths of babes and of sucklings and of men that were very wise. Yea, from his own poor servants, out of their mouths also had he often heard the truth. And yet he accepted not Jesus.

But now, the rather, cursed he Simon of Cyrene. He said, "I will get thee, O thou Simon; for I see a way. I perceive what it is that hath come across the mind of Cæsar. I will make thee a Christian, if I can. In any case, Cæsar shall be jealous, yet more jealous, of his godhead, as concerneth thee, and shall hate thee more for that than he shall love thee for thine inexhaustible wealth. Let me see. The best of mine agents— Who shall poppy thee, O Jew, into sweet rest any more, until that thou art stricken by death, either in the Mines of the Wretched, or else on a cross? And the slower the way, the better."

He beat upon a gong, whereat two servants (which knew about this chamber, and waited upon it) came. Sarcogenes said, "The Jew woman, O Marcion and Apelles." The woman was brought by the mastigophorus.

Said the Man of Sin, "Beat her."

The woman looked unto him, crying: "Have pity on me, since I tremble."

"Pity!" shouted he, vomiting language which seemed to have come from the refuse of all the tongues of earth, "I will have thee flayed alive, an if thou once callest for pity again."

The mastigophorus beat her with many stripes, so that she fell, at length, fainting.

Whereat Sarcogenes said, "Yet another hour for her of work each day. And may all the curses of Hades rest upon thee, O thou detestable Amahnah."

. . . . . And Simon, when he had come back from his loud (but futile) rejection of the Christ before the whole Basilica, had had music and slept.

He awoke, and said unto Conatus: "Did I leave this place and go back unto the Basilica, or did I but sleep?"

Conatus said, "Master! Master!"

Simon slept again, and again awoke. He said to Conatus, "I dreamed that I awoke and spake with thee a little while ago, but I only dreamed. Now I know that I wake. And happy times await me surely, for I also dreamed of Berith. Then he remembered the part which he had played in the Basilica, his brow was sore troubled.

"Why," asked he, "Conatus, art thou ever a man of so great peace? When all the world is on my shoulders (or so it seemeth, and I am not Atlas either) why hast thou only peace?"

"I, Master!"

"Thou. Tell me thy secret. I see thee ever with an infinite exaltation in thine eye!" Then, as Simon looked upon his servant and true friend, he believed yet again that he beheld in the eyes of the humble Conatus, the sweetly solemn look of Christ, and he rose quickly, and said: "Away!"

"Master!"

"Away! Get hence!"

But he quickly got thence himself, and, passing out among the courts, made haste to that loneliest place of all, the place of the evergreens, the viridarium. For behold he was lonely, and in the midst of solitude and silence, was less of a hermit than among his own peoples.

He went, therefore, in among the cypresses, and sate in the cold white seat which there was in the midst of the darkness, there beside his unsunned sun-dial.

He knelt and prayed. But whether to the Father alone, the man himself knew not. Yet he prayed, and rose again, and sate melancholy in the seat, and said aloud to his soul: "As the sparks fly

upward! And rather had I upon me even now the gray garments of my simple shepherdhood than all these."

He thought of everything which had been said and done at the trial, whereat he had been tried of so many crimes before Cæsar. Once again he beheld the vast Basilica, seeming to stand out great yet also trivial before him, devoid of space and time, with its multitude of priests and philosophers, its gods of marble and of bronze, yea and all the peoples of the mighty world, and Demos and Vulgus and Mobilis and Defectus, and that Grand Accuser, Ophidion, and Cæsar himself with Philautia by his side. How he had thought to place a seal of closeness over his lips that day. Yet how he had spoken like a brazen trumpet to the world. "Jehovah! Jesus!" Was there any that had not heard? And of what avail his impassioned rejection afterward?

"Why was it that I so spake, and did ruin me? Might they not—these Gentiles, these idolaters—have seen, if see they would, the walls of our synagogues? Might they not have entered into them whenas they wished, and have become our proselytes at will? But thou wouldst speak, O vain tongue, thou wouldst speak! And thou hast spoiled everything. Even as I did have the very heart of Cæsar in my fingers, thou spakest up and didst ruin me.

"Or, O Lord God, usedst thou me? Or was it only in my heart already that I should say those things, and yet I knew it not?" Like a lighted lamp in a cavern, this idea began to illumine in his mind various hitherto unsuspected recesses and (as he supposed) dangerous pits of belief. "Methought I had been a crypto-Jew, yet was I not conversant—" There was an eternal conflict somehow between himself and (so he believed) his surroundings, which was the world.

The wingéd seeds were being blown about by the restless wind, and one of these, chance-borne (or so it appeared to Simon) came finally within the circle of the cypresses, and so to rest in the half-closed palm of the Jew. Simon held it idly, turning it now and again with uncomprehending fingers. And did see the seed not, for his pore-blind eyes were fixed on nothing.

What thought Cæsar now of his speaking out? What, in especial, thought Philautia and what the world? He pondered deeply. Then, What thought his own people of these matters? What the Christians? The more he pondered, the more inextricably perplexed he became. He began, also, to see himself, through a long succession of grievous days, more and more perplexed continually. Would death end all before— Death!

There was in this man still the typical Jew's keen joy in life, and, with the thought of death, he felt chill waves in his hot veins.

Death!

He appeared to be swimming in a vast, an infinite, sea of melancholy. He knew from what he had heard—

He arose and looked about the cypresses, then at the space behind the seat on which he had been sitting, as if he had expected to find there the hollow-hooded Thanatos himself, with bent form and ready knife.

Death!

Then he cried, "O Adonai, Adonai, 'tis I that worship thee in truth. Wilt thou not hearken unto me? Was it not for my love of thee and for my toughness and my strength that thou didst choose me out of many? Yet knowest thou not that I am but a man? Is my flesh of brass, or my bones of iron that they never can be broke? Yet hast thou given me burdens of hardness— See this triliterate brand upon me! O Adonai! Didst thou give unto me only a covenant of wretchedness?

"I am but a bit of dreaming dust. Hast thou not with me also a covenant of peace? Why should the burden of thy tragic priesthood be ever upon my shoulders alone? Are there not other men? Choose them, therefore, that they may also bear a little. For lo, I shall go down into Hades if I be not very soon at rest."

Rest? Death!

Somehow, "Death," kept coming up in his mind continually, and he thought long about this thing men call death, or dissolution, yet always in connection, too, with God. And what was God? He began to review the opinions he had long since formed, but, also long since, had well-nigh forgotten, concerning the nature and essence of God. How very differently, now, he conceived of that essence! What was the cause of the change? He searched far down in his consciousness, but could not find the reason.

"God," he thought, is a being absolutely infinite, something which lieth beneath the appearances of things, in fact the only being which lieth beneath the appearance of things. And a portion of this underlying essence is constituted by the minds and souls of men. All else than the Infinite Being are merely appearances.

"God has attributes of which we know but two—thought and extension. God understandeth himself and loveth himself, and therefore our spirits, which are portions of the divine substance, love God and are loved by Him." After a dreary silence, he added: "And we

love one another—we should love one another—even our enemies." Here he paused and pondered long and deeply.

"God, however, hath no will in man's (the temporal) sense. He seeth all things perfect and changeless and wholly co-existent, hence also can He have no future purposes.

"But, in time—the minds that exist in time—these minds are subject necessarily to evil—for that they have temporal wills for the forming of future purposes, which must often fail of completion, hence sin.

"But why should God make man, at first, a temporal creature? Why did he make space? First of all, Why time? What can justify the creation of that thing which seemeth to set the spirit of man (which is temporal) apart from that of God (which is eternal)?"

Some dim conception of the wish of the Lord to present Himself in certain loving relations to His own temporal manifestations began to take vague shape in his staggering imagination.

"How could the highest love come into existence? In what way? In what way?"

He recalled again, as on the darkening hour of the crucifixion, and on each of the specially sorrowful days whenafter he had met that bearer of the secular light, even Lampadephorus, the teaching of Anaxagoras, which saith that many of the stars are worlds quite like our own, and that they may perchance be inhabited by people of like passions with ourselves. In such a case would not Adonai be obliged, would He not even wish— Stepping from star to star, throughout the ages, from crucifixion unto crucifixion, He—

Would not this explain the mystery of space and time, the multitude of planets and the lamps of heaven which shine upon them—a mystery which had been so baffling unto children and philosophers?

He began to feel that he had wandered far from the teachings of Parush, had added very much even to the teachings of Moses. And he would have tried to prove the questions more, but that, from a region just beyond his own outermost wall, a strange complaining sound arose again, clearly of mechanical origin, and yet, in a way, bearing a poignant resemblance to the heart-broken cry which he himself would have uttered an if he could—the cry of a person whose burden was almost greater than could be borne. Ophidion—it came from the house of Ophidion, one of that basest creature's outlying courts. And, after all, was he himself any better than a treadmill servant of Ophidion? Was he not, at Ophidion's behest, merely working a drear treadmill unto Cæsar? Only, the mill which he, Simon, treaded, had golden steps instead of wood. And, worn out, at the end—the mines,

the cross! Oh God! Oh Adonai! Why should son of Abraham be servant to Ophidion? But—was not Ophidion a servant unto the Lord? Yea, though he, Ophidion, knew it not. The man of the cross suffered himself to think upon this thing no further, but, with a proud despair, began to recall (as often he had done before in this very viridarium) all the skeptical philosophers (and that was a many) whose works he had aforetime read, as, for example, Lucretius, Ænesidemus, etc. Then he said, "I am a fool that I believe on anything whatever. Yea, I will not believe, and I do not. Two things exist, they two alone—Cæsar and I. And I must escape from Cæsar. So much is plain, no more.

"Why! Now I do begin to breathe easily again. So fearful had I become that I had fallen into an idolatrous anti-idolatry. Shall I make of my fear of thee, O Christ, an idol the which I shall worship? Have I not been doing this very thing? So foolish had I become! and, at bottom, truly for this, that I had believed on God, and had thought that a man might know the things that are to be hereafter. But man knoweth nothing, even of the things of now.

"This is the simple truth. Therefore will I believe it utterly, and the truth shall make me free."

Now, deep in the heart of the Jew (as in the heart of every normal man, but not so strong and abiding) was a wish to see God, to behold Him even as a brother, whom one might, indeed, take by the hand and kiss. "Oh that One might come with supernatural tenderness and with supernatural power, even as Socrates and Plato did predict must be!" At the bottom of his soul, it was this feeling (righteous enough in itself) which, by a strange and yet most natural excess, had made of Simon, both in Egypt and in Petra, also in the Land of Canaan, an idolater veritable. This, too, by a strange reversal, or inversion, of thought, had made of the man an idolater also since his coming into Rome, and for this, that (as he himself had plainly seen) it had caused a fear of his own possible reception of Jesus, until, in his heart, he worshipped not the very Lord, but that fear itself and that hatred of Christ. And now, as his love of Adonai and wish to see Him in the flesh was tapping at his heart's door, he closed down even the window, shutting and fastening it, and making an absolute darkness therein, and saying to himself: "There is nothing at all that can be without, therefore none knocketh." So again he hath an idol, this Simon of Cyrene, the idol called Atheism. Poor Simon of Cyrene!—Simon which loveth the Lord better than doth any other man alive. Incurable idolater also he, and solely for this strange reason, that so very much he doth love God.

And Simon indeed suffered.

Not without suffering could Simon of Cyrene have said to himself, "There is no God."

After a little, he found (and was greatly surprised) that he had not quieted the great question in the least, but was wondering about it again, and tossing it like a madman's ball, to and fro, in his mind.

There came to him the recollection of what the Chazzan, what the Archisynagogus, what Jeezer and Morah and Jehovah-Jireh had said unto him as about Jesus. With a pang, he suddenly cast these things all out from his heart, crying again: "I have said I would not so much as believe upon Jehovah. Why, then, ponder, or anywise recall, the prophecies about His Son?"

So he put the whole question by, saying: "I will see to this at my greater leisure, for unto some certain conclusion must I arrive." But all at once he found that he was reflecting again upon Christianity. And after a time, his imagination stopped once more.

There was a strange, uncertain region (as he saw) which it could not cross, being under, as it seemed, a heavy compulsion and restraint. Sometimes again, he believed that he could cross that region —but only with superhuman aid.

And a sudden homesickness, a sickness for the Land of his Fathers, of Canaan, descended upon him like a leaden cloud. "Were I only in Canaan," thought he, "the troubles and the trials of my life would surely and forever cease."

But he swept this thought, also, aside, saying: "Two things exist alone—Cæsar and I. And I must make peace with Cæsar." So that now, in his soul, which was verging unto dissolution (but he knew that not) from his body, and which, as it were, should have been transformed into a very temple prepared for Adonai, there grew up merely thoughts and plans for that body's safety and fleshly success.

But again he began, spite of himself, to think of God, and of God in connection with him, Simon. He reviewed his whole life, calling up before him Leah, which is also Berith, likewise Temunah of the South, and Emah the Egyptian, and Gillul, the Petran, and Abaddone and her brother Shikkuts, and Superbus and Superbia, and all the others of the seven strange peoples that were dead and dust (he thought) these very many years. Then he became aware again that a nightingale was calling to its mate outside the grove, a little later that the treadmill in the near-by court was creaking still, creaking and creaking steadfastly. He straightened slowly up, and stood upon his feet, for he found that he himself had gotten into the bent, tread-

mill attitude. "Small wonder," quoth he. He raised his arms, in the fashion of a giant cross.

In this strange posture he stood, devoid of motion, for a long time, looking like some one that posed and passed from dream unto idler dream, but, in reality, his was a wounded soul naked, out of space and time, battling against Jesus.

He let fall his arms, and passed back into the world again, coming outside the circle of the cypresses. Then he paced the walks of the lonely court, marching restlessly from closed door to closed door and from closed door back unto closed door again, till, in his teeming brain, he had formed highly thought out plans—plans, that is to say, both as concerning great changes for himself and his *familia* and also as concerning Ophidion.

CHAPTER XLIX

And It Came to Pass

Conatus, meanwhile, threaded the many courts sombrely, seeing to it that all went well in the house of him that had borne, and still bore, the cross. Then, once more in the atrium, he heard his Master's rich, mellifluous voice coming nearer and nearer, ringing out as in the time before the Trial, hymning the great joys of the synagogue.

Conatus ran up by the stairway at the side wall of the court, and so to his cubiculum. He cast his olden garments off, and put on fresher, and leaped and capered like a young he-goat, and put his fists up in the manner of pugilists, and battered first this, then that, airy and insubstantial opponent—as, to wit, Potus, Ebrius, Tepor, Cessatio, Prodigus, and even Ophidion (the father of fools) himself.

Then he sate down, and indited an epistle to Christopherus—Christopherus, who had known this very long time (but Simon not at all) that Conatus and Trivialis were one and the same very man.

. . . . . And, in those days, Sarcogenes, which was also Ophidion, set on foot (but by merest indirections) movements among the Christians in Rome, looking toward the conversion of Simon. He said to them he sent, "If ye get him to be a Christian, see ye unto it that he falleth away from righteousness. Teach him, in the very bosom of the Church, lust, polygamy, theft, lying, the rapine of whole provinces, fearfullest murders. Justify ye all these things by distorting the sense of the Scriptures, in especial the olden, which lendeth itself more readily to distortion in these matters than doth the new."

And Simon was driven the farther away even from the elder books themselves by these indelicate and basely founded efforts on the part of Ophidion. For he saw clearly in them Ophidion's hand. He waved the secret agents aside, saying: "Have not I a good religion? And do I trouble any of you, saying that ye should change your religious beliefs because of the things which I believe and which ye do not? Long not we, the twain of us, for the Lord in the flesh, the while thou believest that He hath come already, but I that He is still to come? And why dost thou say I bore Jesus' cross, when it is no such thing?" Every man went away, as it were sorrowing.

And Christopherus and Nea Diatheka also came often unto Simon's gates, attended both by Joy and Cheerfulness, but these were not admitted. The heart of the Jew was filled with a strange fire, and his bowels yearned for his friend and his own sons, yet would he nowise look upon either Christopherus or them. But he said, "The man is an idolater: he believeth on three gods—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Also, was he not, in a very true manner of saying, the cause of my speaking out?"

In those days, also, came to Simon's house Philautia, searching for the secret of eternal life. She said unto him, "I want not life eternal for any but myself and Cæsar. For who are others that I should look out for them a thing so precious?"

But she went away disconsolate.

And it was said for years that the reason why Cæsar's Selfishness would not remain on the side of the Jew was that she had come and looked upon him and spoken with him, and had gone away saying: "He also, like myself, is still seeking for the secret, which is yet, as he understandeth it, to be brought into the world by a certain Messiah." And when she had learned that another sect of the Jews (for so the Romans called the Christians) had declared that Jesus, already come, was the Messiah, and when, also, she had heard about a great evangelist of that sect named Christopherus, she went to him (but a long time after the trial of Simon) and inquired, saying: "Hast thou the secret of eternal life?"

He said, "Wast thou not at Simon's trial?"

She spake and answered him, "Truly I was there, but I have had so much to think over in connection with myself and Cæsar since that time that I do not rightly remember the things that were there said. Only this I do remember, to wit, that the Jew is declared by certain ones to have the secret of eternal life."

Said then Christopherus, "Both the Jew and Jesus, and, after them twain, I."

"Thou! Thou! Thou hast the secret?"

"Even so. I have it."

She looked in his eyes, and saw he spake truth, for she beheld the light eternal within him. She, therefore, said over and over: "Tell me the secret of eternal life." But he, each time: "Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor, and be humble, and follow Jesus, which is the Christ."

Then she: "I wish no happiness for others than myself, either here or elsewhere, but only for me, and for Cæsar, which is myself. But tell me thy secret of a surety, O happy man, and I will recompense thee with mountains of gold."

He: "Were I to sell the secret, then should both thou and I lose it utterly."

And she believed that he mocked her, because, by her nature, she could not understand the veritable secret of life eternal. So she went away in sore heaviness of heart and eternal despair.

But Trochus, on his part, finding out at length Christopherus, became a convert to Christianity. Much he labored by the side of Christopherus, until, indeed, he perished, being happy all the days, for that he had found the secret of life eternal.

And Trochus loved the Jew, and would have spoken unto him, but that the Jew suffered him not, partly because of the veil which was over his heart, and partly because of his great business with Cæsar.

For, in consequence of the luxury, vice and extravagance of the Court, and the many drains which were therefore made upon the peoples, and which were more than these could in any wise bear, a fearful sedition had arisen among them, and Cæsar's house was threatened, yea and his very life itself. And Simon went unto the rescue of Cæsar even as aforetime, but, on this occasion, to a far greater extent and far higher degree than ever before, pouring out in the lap of Cæsar such a treasury of gems and moneys, and of documents more precious than either, that the spirit of all the world went into a delirium of joy, and forgot himself and fell down on the floor and worshipped the Jew's money, saying: "Salvation is of the Jews." Then was Simon's heart glad. He thought: "I am safe forever."

And Cæsar declared and ordained him for a *comes principis*, "companion of the highest."

Said Simon to himself then, "It is settled. I will complete a transaction I long have had in mind, and the plans for which I shaped on that miserable day in the viridarium, when my soul was so troubled."

He carried out his plans, and went back into his domus, and called Conatus, saying: "Conatus, I have bought Ophidion, Ophidion and his household, yea and his domus too, which abutteth upon mine. These own I. I have bought them. I have paid for them. Their title is in me. Rejoice therefore, and let not metes nor limits be placed upon thy rejoicing. For behold, I am even a companion of the Prince, great Cæsar. And I own Ophidion!"

But Conatus said softly and all of a tremble, "Master! I fear, I fear! Master, I fear! When Cæsar permitteth unto any one such a thing—I do fear!"

CHAPTER L

As the Sparks Fly Upward

There were, in those days, signs, significations, and portents. Arms were heard clashing in the sky. A lion, loose from the vivarium, ran about the Forum whining piteously and harming no one. In the country cattle had spoken, blood had flowed from wells. Wolves, coming into the city (Apollo knoweth whence) had howled about the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus for a night. The brazen and marble statues in all the heathen temples had shed tears and sweated blood.

And swifter indeed than a weaver's shuttle passed the cross-weighted days of Simon of Cyrene—each bearing him steadily downward (so he sometimes felt) yet each, too, in some strange way, withholding his bones from destruction.

Where would this all end? When would come some final upturn—or downturn? What was there could ruin a man like him? he asked; again, What was there could save him?

He began to revert to certain other plans he had formed in the viridarium.

And a great stir and bustle arose by consequence in the deeps of his house; yea, in the deeps of all his house arose a great commotion. There was many a hurried consultation with Conatus and with lesser supervisors. While, apparently, the *familia* of Simon of Cyrene had not increased, yet, in some of his insulas he was softly getting together hundreds of high-thewed men—servants they, well hardened and rightly understanding all the arts of sword and buckler. "There is some great dream at the bottom of all these things," said Conatus, and wondered.

And Simon enlarged his house continually, and filled it with more and ever more servants, and these toiled day and night—that the beautiful idea which lay in the mind of Simon of Cyrene might on a day be accomplished. So he dreamed and toiled and drave, and drave and toiled and dreamed. And the hours and the months ran by as handfuls of sand.

And all the houses that were round about his own, these became Simon's also. And still he built more houses.

And still he dreamed and toiled and drave, and drave and toiled and dreamed. And a part of the world cried, "Simon of Cyrene hath gone mad!" Others answered, "Yea, for gold. Have we not always said unto you, he is of kin with Alukah?"

But none of the peoples appeared to know, or at least in any wise to understand, the great Jew's dream, which was brighter than the shiningest gold.

And so the Jew toiled and drave and dreamed, and dreamed and toiled and drave.

And hardest of all he drave the servants of Ophidion, for he hated that man and his house. Yea, even though the house was the house of himself now, still hated he them.

He said often to his supervisors, "Lay the work most heavily of all upon the house of Ophidion, for, even though it be mine own house also, yet it is very hateful unto me, because of all that I have endured."

The supervisors obeyed, laying the tasks most heavily on Ophidion and on all his house, for that their master had suffered heavily from that house in former days.

And Simon of Cyrene prospered as had he a Midas touch in both his hands—and yet a great fear lay ever in his heart together with his dream.

What about Cæsar? What about Rome? Mines—amphitheaters —crosses— Poor factor merely, why dost thou dream thou art rich in thine own right?

Whenever the Jew went upon the Forum—which he did like a remorseless emblem of eternal energy—people stopped and pointed him out to one another, saying: "That is he." Others said, "Cæsar is a sharp one." Also, "The Jew will get what he deserves." "Pig!" "Usurer!" "Extortioner!" "Formalist!" "Fool!" Even his ancient patrons, Nummus and Praesens Pecunia, began to whisper strange things about him and to wonder what would come in "the Jew's next great caravan of solid dreams." "His eye," said they, "is filling with preternatural light. He talketh in the very Basilica

of Æmilius as if to imaginary buyers. Sometimes he giveth orders as though to legionaries." "The man imagineth he is Cæsar," said many.

And, indeed, Simon did often declare in his heart: "Thou, O Cæsar! From thee I will wrest thy bright throne itself, but I will do the thing I purpose."

And all the world grew more and more in awe of Simon. Whenever he appeared in the streets or Forum, a lane of wondering heads was made for him, and lips grew silent.

Yet ever the double-tongued belied him, and the single-tongued abused him straightforwardly.

Sometimes a riot arose on account of the Cross-bearer, and once an angry multitude surrounded him (in the presence, too, of Nummus and Praesens Pecunia) there upon the very Forum, and voices declared that Simon of Cyrene ought to die, for that any man grown rich as he, must have done nothing useful, but must perforce have taken his money from the poor—or else have starved his servants, or (if it be not wholly unthinkable) have robbed Cæsar. Do not even Alukah and Gannab the same?"

Then a voice in the crowd cried out, "He hath instituted immense plans of commerce, which have enriched both Rome and the far distant world. Is he himself entitled to nothing?" Simon thought the voice the voice of Christopherus, but he could not see the man. And he recalled then that, somewhere, he had heard that Christopherus also had had a trial before Cæsar, and before the multitudes of this world. He wondered how it had happened that he, Simon, had not been present at that trial, even as Christopherus had been present at his.

Just at this moment, a number of people were shouting: "Down with him! Away with him! He is a fool!"—meaning both Christopherus and Simon.

Then some cried, "The soldiers! The soldiers of Cæsar!"

And they fled, every man of them, for it was the common impression among the multitudes that Simon (though not Christopherus) was, at this time, the friend of Cæsar.

But Christians, whenever they gazed on the eyes of Simon of Cyrene, forgot both time and place, and beheld alone old prophecies.

As for the servant, Conatus, he looked upon his Master daily with greater and greater devotion. He recognized indeed the free choice which he had himself exercised in staying with his Master, as well as the fearful coercion which destiny had wielded over Simon of Cyrene —to make of the Jew so shining a man and so shining a mark for

Cæsar and for the world. "Poor bearer of the cross and of Cæsar's gold! Thou art really very poor, O Crucifer Aureatus. Jesus himself was not poorer than thou. Pitiable Simon!"

Often he looked not at his Master at all, but beyond him—at something the Master could not see.

Then again there was the great desire to the which he could never give utterance. Would not the— He wanted the "wonderful thing" (for so he still called it) the wonderful thing of things to happen.

And Conatus, in those days, felt always bewildered and expectant, had a sense of waiting—for he knew not what.

His dumb fear sometimes caused him to stand at gaze, when he should have been at work. He seemed to be ever listening, listening, with more and more attentive ear for some world-assault on the outermost door of Simon of Cyrene.

And Simon himself sometimes declared in his soul that his days were counted. Yet again he shouted in ecstasy, "I have never borne one load, I, Abraham's son. More worlds! Mine arms are full of pristine energy, mine heart with happy hope. Come intrigues, combatants, competitions, plotters, profound problems and prophecies, shipwrecks, Sarcogeneses, Cæsars!"

And when, as happened on other occasions, he listened and listened for something to come at his outermost door (a predestined sound, as it were, or something which hath not a name, perchance because no rightful word can ever be found to express it) then the man shouted not at all, but only whispered: "I am but the tool, the feeble instrument of time and space." He felt on some occasions that his downfall was to be a sudden leap, then again a slow descent amid ever-thickening shadows.

At such times he companied much with one of his own *familia,* Abjectio (Self-abasement), also with the sisters of this man, Poenitentia (Repentance) and Humilitas (Humility). He did not know that these people were all Christians; he understood too little of the sect to guess the truth. He only knew that, whenever he was among them, he felt, at times, a great pleasure which, in the presence of the Romans, he would have been too proud to acknowledge.

Then again he tried to make himself believe that, somehow, Jesus was responsible for all his sufferings. Spite of these endeavors, he could not quite blame Jesus—feeling all the while that his own execution drew anigh, and that, somehow, he too, like Jesus (yet in a different wise also) had been, from the beginning, destined as a sacrifice to many people. He called up ancient prophecies, which now seemed to apply either unto him or unto Jesus, and with almost equal apti-

tude. " 'Tis well," said he, "O Jesus, that thou wast a Jew, for thou hast been at least as a type of many others of our people—poor, cast-out sheep, fit only for heathen sacrifices. O dumb, long-driven Israel! O Lord! O Adonai, Adonai! Canst thou not come in the flesh? Blessed is He that is yet to appear in the name of Adonai."

He was ever busy, Simon of Cyrene, in those curious days, as hath been already said, with some immense but unknown task. Yet ever his eyes were vacant in a dreaming also, for he dreamed and dreamed as he worked. And ever the dream and the work ran on together, like the busy flowing of the little brook, Kedron, and the tune it made in the sweet valley of Jehosaphat.

And the thing which mostly troubled the man from Cyrenaica, in those days, was not even the nameless fear of the coming of an unnamed sound, or of an emissary, or of a rapidly growing body of emissaries or of terrible groups of unnamed sounds at the outermost door of his insula. But that which troubled him most was his ever-increasing loneliness and feeling of being different from other men. There was no more desolate way between the eternities than that which Simon of Cyrene trod alone. He struggled to make himself like other people. But the more he struggled, the more he became quite different—this atheist which loved Adonai and had borne Christ's cross. One after another, this door and that was closed to his tragic intimacies. Poor expatriate! Poor wanderer! Poor outcast even from the hearthstone of himself, for behold, his very slaves do call him "different."

And the feeling of his likeness to Christ grew stronger and stronger on Simon of Cyrene—not a likeness, to be sure, in the matter of extreme perfection, and divinity of patience under sufferings greater than flesh and blood could endure. Only—a likeness. At all events, he had borne Christ's cross, and, ever since, had been in an agony of heart and mind for the fact. Via dolorosa through all the years of his existence! Selah!

And ever the work and the dream went on together. What was the dream?

On a day he called Conatus, saying: "Thou art o'erwatched. I will give thee therefore freedom for the Saturnalia. Even as a freedom is given to the servants of Romans, so give I unto thee thy freedom now."

And Conatus went to a meeting-place of Christians (but was there, of purpose, too early and in great solitude). So, in the solitude, he preached with fervor to empty chairs. Never could he gird up cour-

age enough to preach unto actual people; and when, at length, people began to come in, he fled backward out of the place.

And he fared home sore awearied.

Then said Simon unto him, "For this, that thou lookest so sorrowful, and yet art faithful unto me, I will tell thee now of my great dream, Conatus. But see that Cæsar's attention is called not to the dream. Perchance he may care little. Yet again—I fear, I doubt. He hath other and far more grievous affairs against me, as thou well knowest—the speaking out as concerning Jehovah, and much else—and yet this—

"Conatus, believest thou in the scriptures of my people, them that prophesied of old?"

Said Conatus, faintly: "I believe," and he once more would have spoken unto his Master fully, but was yet afeard. Still, he said in his heart: "Pray God the wonderful thing may happen—the miracle."

But Simon said only, "My dream is this, to carry out some of those beautiful prophecies of old. What the Lord hath said to the world by the mouths of Amos, Joel, Isaiah and Jeremiah, yea and of others that were also wise and holy, that seek I to fulfill. I go to recover the Land: for I am weary and homesick. What thinkest thou of the dream?"

Conatus stood before his Master thunderstricken. Yea, he would truly (an he could) have said to him that Israel had already been restored by the founding of the Church at Pentecost, the which, on a day, would conquer all this world, both rich and poor and low and high and mighty and noble and learned and unlearned, and that then the spear should become a pruning-hook and the sword a ploughshare. And Jesus should reign forever. "What matter," he would have said to Simon, "that thou shouldst take the dust and soil called Palestine? In the ages which are to come that land may be taken and retaken a hundred times, but the prophecies—they have already been fulfilled in Christ, his church." But the man trembled, and said nothing.

But Simon, the Master, attending not to the embarrassment of Conatus, spake on to his servant like a man in ecstasy: "Knowest thou not," said he, "that the sons of Abraham cannot be preserved as a nation save in that very Land only? And behold the birds which fly above this court, the birds of passage up among the clouds! Hath not God placed in their hearts a longing for one certain land? And so hath it been with us, O Conatus. Thou knowest not the Jew. Am I a Roman, a Greek? Belong I, as a citizen, in this city, I or any of

my brethren? Do not the peoples of all the other nations drop their heads as I pass, and say, each unto each: 'He is different. He is a Jew. He is not of us.'? Yea, that do they, and so it shall be, by God! And as Greeks have Greece, and Romans Rome, and even the birds of passage know the place the whereunto they belong by the will of the Creator, so coveteth the Jew his only house upon this earth. Not all the spears and swords of Cæsar can prevail against the Jew, for he goeth by the will of the Word."

Conatus looked on his Master with pity quite infinite. He said, "O Master, what thou willest I will help to do. Whither thou goest, thither will I also go. But—Master—Cæsar—he is strong—he—shapeth destinies—he—"

"But in the day, Conatus, when thou and I are also strong, we then will shapen our own destinies. For behold! The Lord is with us!"

"He is also with Cæsar, O Master. God shapeth the destinies of men through thee, and through Cæsar, and even through me (though that is very little) and also through each and every one of us. Let us not—I fear—but I will do those things thou wishest, as ever I have done."

"Do, then, the things I tell thee, and all shall be well."

And the house of Simon of Cyrene, day by day, was, to all outward seeming, like a grave, but yet, within, there were only excitement and interminable labors.

And Simon went upon the Forum as of old. Going forth one day he findeth that a certain caravan of his hath come up out of the deserts of the South to Mauretania, bearing a million million rubies, the like of each whereof had never been seen upon this world before. He said, repeating the prophet Jeremiah: "As one gathereth eggs that are forsaken, so have I gathered all the earth." And the peoples did marvel because of the wealth of Simon of Cyrene. Even Cæsar came up in his litter, there upon the Forum, and gave the Jew a sweet kiss, and wished him quite well of his treasures.

Whereat the heart of the Jew sank, for he had heard (and knew partly from experience) that the kiss of Cæsar ever boded ill for him, whosoever that might be, which did receive it. But he felt of the pearl in the flesh of his strong arm, and was better comforted.

And as he went back home, he met certain of his ancient enemies, to wit, them of olden Cyrenaica, and of Egypt, Sinai, also Petra, yea Palestine itself. He threw these men a Roman greeting, then one in their own fair tongues. Still they spake not, or answered by gesture, but passed lowering.

He went to his house, and Conatus said: "Knowest thou that Seneca, the moral philosopher, hath gone? Cæsar sent him word that he should open his veins. Therefore is he gone."

And, in those latter days, in accordance with many prophecies, there were secret meetings of the Christians, secret especially from Sarcogenes and for the avoidance of disastrous persecutions—the which, however, when it was needful for to do, they bore right sweetly for Christ's sake. "Let us indeed be as wise as serpents," said a certain elder at a meeting, using the words of Christ, "yet, in adversity (as in prosperity) faithful to Jesus also.

"Woe, woe, woe, unto them which do us these evil things, but let us bear all patiently for Christ's sake, who died to save us.

"And now I would warn you once again concerning Sarcogenes, which, rightly named, is Ophidion. Keep him away from your meetings, all, so far as it lieth in your power. For he teacheth many iniquitous doctrines. For ensample, that all may be saved by solely the observance of some or another form, and without regard to the way of their lives. He teacheth also that Jesus was not divine, but only the best of mortal men—as if, forsooth, seeing that Jesus fully taught His own divinity, He could, if that were a base lie, be the best of men or in any wise good."

When the elder had finished, there arose one called Criticus. Criticus said, "I have here a letter belonging to this body, and which came, or is said to have come, from the apostle, Paul. But my friend, Censorius, and I, having examined the document, do now report that, though the matter thereof is interesting and probably of some value, yet that it is not by one, but by several, and they very different, hands; for, on a certain page, the writing leaneth to the left, while, on another, to the right, and yet again the letters and the words stand wholly upright. Again, the ink with which this letter was written is not the same in all places. Think what that means. Believe ye that any man, writing one single epistle, though of many sheets, would ever exchange his ink for any other? It is our opinion, O disciples of Christ, that the letter is a fabrication and by many hands, and that often the fabricators did change their ink abominably.

"Then again, the quality of the parchment of this letter is not quite the same in every sheet. Some of the sheets are from Pergamus, some from Tyre, others again from Sicily. Think ye it probable that any one man would use three differing kinds of parchment in a single letter? It is unthinkable.

"From all which matters," went on Criticus, "(each one of them

certain) it is highly probable that (1) The epistle is not from Paul. (2) It is a base fabrication by some pernicious person or persons, who hath some ill will toward Christ. (3) It is not the result of malice, or any intention to deceive, but of pure ignorance, the fabricators not at all understanding what they wrote. (4) That St. Paul never existed. (5) That he wrote, notwithstanding, certain portions of the letter, but these not very important. (6) That he never saw Christ, or undertook a journey to Damascus. (7) That there never was any Christ, but only Jesus, who was merely a man and a Jew. (8) That Jesus never existed. (9) That He was not a Jew. (10) That He was not crucified. (11) That He never arose from the dead. (12) That He was crucified, but did not arise. (13) That He arose but had not been crucified. (14) That there are no Jews. (15) That the Jews never were in Egypt. (16) That there never was such a man as Abraham, or Shem, or Noah, or even Adam. Nor had God created the physical universe, but matter had always existed and nothing else, from which it followed inevitably (17) That there is no God."

Then burst out some of the more loving and devoted among the disciples, "Ye have taken away our faith."

But Censorius and Criticus answered them, "We have not touched your faith. We have simply placed it on secure foundations. Before we made these plain investigations into letters and parchments—as to which, it is fair to say, we can in no one case agree with each other—ye were all in a haze, but now ye do see perfectly."

Then spake Christopherus, saying: "I came unto you this day to speak of more blessed and urgent things. But, first, about this document. Ye do see that the letter is full of the spirit of Christ. Do fabricators fabricate such things? Whereunto? Do not fabricators fabricate devilish matters? Let us be content that Christ is even in this missive (and there is no one else that is like unto Christ) whatsoever may be the name of him, or of them, which did write it."

At that there were shouts and cries of "Ignorant!" "Superstitious!" "Not knowing one letter from another!"

Christopherus gave no heed, he said only: "It is meet I say unto you a certain thing as to them that are accredited with bringing upon us the direful things which now are about to be. Many have said that the fountain of our trouble is this great Jew, Simon of Cyrenaica—he that liveth on the borders between the Subura and the Carinæ. But I would assure you, brethren, that the charge is without foundation, for that this man is in deed and in truth one of the anointed of God. How strangely have all prophecies been ful-

filled in him, as well as in Christ! Betah, Azrikam, Jeezer, Morah, and Jehovah-Jireh! And it is not he which hath excited the Ruler of All this World against us, but that perfidious Sarcogenes only—The Lesser Snake—he and perchance Alukah.

"And Sarcogenes is a vile man in numerous ways. He hath put the Old Covenant to the basest of uses. Thus, for ensample, he hath tried to prove thereby the rightness of polygamy and even of concubinage, also of the rightness and justifiableness of revenge—'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' etc. And all by torture of the language and strange punishment of the sense. And he it was that did surely bring to pass the incarceration of mine own lovely Nea Diatheka, most beautiful of women, the health and solace of my soul. But, as for Simon, he is wholly innocent of any of these matters, but hath indeed suffered many things and great, on his own account, at the hand of this same Sarcogenes.

"And many hate Simon because of the wiles of Sarcogenes, being greatly misled. Others detest him on their own account, because they know he liveth in the borders of mystery and toucheth the garments of the Most High—he, the pennied merchant, aforetime unsophisticated shepherd, of Cyrenaica. Others despise him for that he is a kind of poor, merely human, substitute for the fleshly presence of God, the very reminder and incontestably remaining proof of His former advent and that yet to be. This is the chief reason why so many hate him so much—the idea that a man, a man like ourselves yet so different (an eternal foreigner) should stand as a living monument to all that is in the Scriptures, or that we know, or think or dream about Jehovah, Jehovah-Jesus."

Then rose many of the brethren, and, of their own motion, gave glad witness how, on a certain time, in the Basilica of Cæsar, at Cæsar's tribunal and before the very curule chair, they had heard Simon of Cyrene most closely tried and sorely interrogated, and that he did there and then acquit himself like a great man and a true, for that he rendered most earnest testimony, both as concerning the evil of Cæsar, and the oneness and goodness of God, also of the very divinity and worship of God's son, Jesus, which is truly Christ.

Christopherus, thereupon, with bright tears in his eyes, spake long concerning his knowledge of this man, saying: "Was I not long with him in the Mines of the Wretched? Did I not sorely suffer by his side both then and later too? Did I not truly love him as the best of my friends, even Telephilus?[1] But, for some wild, imaginary of-

[1] Perfect Friend.

fense (or so it seemed to me—the fault may assuredly have been mine own) he left me forever at a shadowy place, where two ways did diverge, and where a cross stood.

"And long have I endeavored to be at friends with this Simon of Cyrene, but ever he hath confounded me as being of that brood of hypocrites and pretended Christians only, the which do band about Ophidion. He, therefore, would never have aught to do either with me or with my good wife, Nea Diatheka, or even with his own sons, Simkah and Gheel.

"Inasmuch, therefore, brethren, as he, which is a good man, and not alone of the physical, but also the spiritual, Israel, hath been in error concerning me, both as to my person and also as to my intents, let us ourselves, therefore, not in like manner do wrong unto him (which meaneth as well as we) confounding him both with Ophidion and also certain of his own race—as, for ensample, Alukah, the horseleech; Gannab, the thief; Na-aph, the adulterer; Na-ash, the usurer; Keseel, the fool; and certain others which, indeed, are sons of Abraham, but only in the flesh. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. [Romans, IX, 6.] Some are Israel in the flesh; others are Israel in God; others still, like ourselves, Israel in God's son. Moreover, there are crimes with which this Simon of Cyrene is charged, of which no Jew at all is guilty—the immolation of children, the drinking of blood, the poisoning of wells, the crucifixion of the Host."

Cried one, "This Simon of Cyrene hath many faults."

"Yea," responded Christopherus, "but the Lord, with imperfect hearts, doeth His own supremely perfect work."

Then said Christopherus to the disciples generally that now he must depart from them, for that he was about to go upon a far journey, even unto Spain, and likewise unto the parts about Cyrene, and unto Asia Minor and unto Persia, and even unto Africa again, into the Land of Cush. "For," said he, "I rest not long in any spot, but desire to deliver everywhere the Good News, especially to the humble. And Nea Diatheka and Cheerfulness and Joy accompany me.

"And wherever I go, I do seek to instill not only the spirit of Christ but also the better part of the heathen learning—that which deserveth to live, and which (even as did this Simon of Cyrene) I got, on a time long gone, first from a Pe-Lesetau, later from Lampadephorus, of whom ye have all heard. And the latter man (as I have lately found out) was indeed my own very father. But this, for a long time, I could not in any wise know."

He cautioned them again that they should be both wise and yet devoid of harm unto anyone. He urged them also that they have no fear, even of Cæsar. "The days will come," said he, "when, without doubt, the most of us shall miserably perish. It will be, I think, as if the end of the world were coming—and indeed how long shall it be till this whole generation which now is the world, is gone—including Cæsar? Yet, one of the first that shall go is this same Simon, which hath been so much belied (as well as misunderstood) by many a person in this city and in all the world, yet which, of a truth, should be very dear to every one of us, and who, I doubt not, is dear indeed unto Him whose cross (as mine own eyes did witness) he (and not I) bore on Calvary."

Then bade he them be of good cheer for that they were Christ's. And he went and left them, and departed to go on his way—if that he might be able to miss certain toils that had been set for him by many of his ancient enemies.

And Simon of Cyrene also met, each day (and whether he was accompanied by his faithful servant, Conatus, or went all alone) as he passed about the streets and in the wondering Forum, more and more of his ancient enemies—them from far Iberia and from the lands of the Vascones and from Aquitania, also from Gaul and the parts about the Belgæ, and from Helvetia also, likewise Germania Barbara, even Krieg and some of his stalwart sons. After these, Ophidion, who was, in a sense, a steward of him, Simon. Ophidion would burst out in a laugh.

And behold, on a day, the chariot of Cæsar, with Cæsar therein, and, by his side, the empty-hooded Thanatos. And it seemed that, when the hood was held in a certain wise, there was, deep down in the hood, a sinister countenance, laughing secretly.

The multitude acclaimed, "Great Cæsar! Great is he! Greater still Jehovah, and his priest, Simon! For Cæsar himself is naught before God."

Then the knees of the Jew grew weak, his bowels as water, his heart failed and stood still. For he saw, of a truth, that Ophidion, even though an instrument of the Almighty, had done this thing.

Said Cæsar, as he halted before the Jew and that multitude which was the world: "Am not I Jehovah? Answer me, Simon of Cyrene, son of Shem. Am not I the Lord of All this World, yea and of that which is to come hereafter?"

And once again, as on those long gone days, the lips of Simon of Cyrene were formed as into a trumpet of brass, and the words of the Lord came through them—"No! No! No!"

Then ran Simon of Cyrene back to his brilliant home.

He said to Conatus, who ran with him: "Sawest thou not the grinning Thanatos, as he sate with Cæsar?"

But Conatus: "I saw nothing which sate by Cæsar except a bright angel—and at this I was sore amazed. And lo! mine eyes, they be not yet unblinded from that seeing. Master, we vision not alike."

However, Simon dwelt at peace for a time, remaining within his walls.

And being, on a day, in his zotheca, and feeling that soon his myriad of ships would fly at a word, both out of Ostia and of Gades, Alexandria and Syracuse, Brundisium, Rhodes and Apollonia, and full many another harbor also, bearing to Palestine loads of arméd men—being here, and at ease, so far as concerneth the body, he thought to console his spirit with the reading of many a skeptical philosopher. These writers were of different mold from that sordid and ignorant fellow which had come to him in Gaul, bringing a sad-sweet message of Amahnah's death. And he read not even yet as a matter of unbelief, quite, but of mere amusement only—the which writings did show that the human mind could not know anything at all, either of the world or how it was made, or of God or of man, or of man's relation to his God, or of men's relations unto one another.

And Simon, the very while he pondered on the skeptic writings, did love Adonai.

But ever his fearful spirit grew more fearful, and his ear hearkened for a thing which he could not name—being, in a way, uncertain as to what did constitute the essence thereof.

Then he went (as often he had done before) saying, "I will see if all be still in readiness at the secret stair." He pressed upon the spring which was in the breast of the statue of Minerva.

And behold, as always before, the statue and its niche moved away. And his eyes, as always before, beheld a chasm of unutterable blackness.

Came forth out of the blackness a fearful stench.

"O Lampadephorus," he cried, "the stairway thou didst build, the darksome grope and passage of a hundred old, crumbling steps and one, it is truly a noisome retreat. Yet what shall a man accomplish if he hesitate to enter, so be such a thing is needful?"

He felt for a torch and means of lighting it (the which he had set in their places on a former day) found all well, and went back into his zotheca, and read again, out of the heathen philosopher Lucretius: "For a god must, and by its very nature, enjoy its immortality without change—at an infinite distance, too, from human affairs and in-

capable of being reached by any of them. For, as a god is all sufficient to itself, needing nothing and likewise fearing nothing from man, it is neither profited by good folks' services nor angered by the deeds of the vicious." Again: "Moreover, anything that may exist, either doth something, or is obliged to suffer the doings of other things which these inflict upon it, or else it simply is in such a way that other things may exist and be done in it. But nothing can do or suffer unless it have bodily substance, nor afford a place for acting or suffering unless it be empty and vacant space. Nothing, as a consequence, can have existence, save empty space and bodily substance." Yet again: "Primordial atoms are of pure solidity, simple, indissoluble, eternal. Unless there be some least, some point at which division endeth, the smallest bodies that exist will be as infinitely composed as the largest. Then there will be no difference between the greatest bodies and the smallest. But this is abhorrent to reason. Hence it is necessary one shall say, There are bodies which have no parts, but consist of the least possible substance. These, therefore, being indivisible and undiminishable, are also solid (or without pores) also eternal." Once more: "Which infinity of space being admitted, there could be no rest for any of the primary atoms which pass eternally therethrough. Rather, driven by incessant motion, part of the eternal atoms, struck by yet other—"

CHAPTER LI

When the Gates Lift Up Their Heads

The sharp ear of Simon caught, at a distance, a scurrying sound, as of swiftly moving feet over the atrium. The sounds grew faster, nearer, rushed up his stairway. The door opened, and Conatus: "Master, away! Begone! The soldiers of Cæsar! Thou art in judgment! Why dost thou tarry? Get thee gone."

Stepped Simon to the atrium door, whence Conatus had fled quickly, and looked out over his great room—his in the past.

All was present as ever before—the calm impluvium beneath the sapphire perforation in the lofty roof, the hypothetic masks of the Jew's numerous ancestors, the Attic tumblers laughing and bouncing on the pavement.

A light air fluttered through the court, swaying the lisping branches of the oriental trees. Just at that moment, the old slave by the water-clock—he with grave, impassive countenance, long beard,

and scythe of eternal unerringness, called forth, like a slow, inevitable machine: "Meridies! Meridies! Time passes, yet be not sad!"

Simon saw in a quick vision the solemn plexus of events which had constituted his life.

He turned, closing the door. And entered the space behind Minerva, and closed that entrance also. Felt for his torch, lighted it, went the hundred steps and one to mystery and yet further fear and also unlimited corruption.

He lifted the foul sewer-lid, and entered the sewer, and closed the way behind him again.

But yet again paused and listened, for he felt that some one followed.

He swept on through the dim-winding sewers, which underlay, like streets, all Rome. Presently he was lost. Whereat, in confusion, he dropped his torch in the flowing filth. And cried in an anguish, "Which is the way from corruption?"

Then heard he a sound as of one that plashed behind him.

And he would have stricken with his sweet blade, but that he heard the syllables, "Master!"

"Conatus? Thou!"

"I, Master; whither—"

"What of my servants, Conatus?"

"Dead. All, all are dead that served within thy house. Time himself lies a-dying."

"And thou?"

"I bleed. The soldiers—I bleed—" The soldiers know thy stairway. Whatever was known to Lampadephorus is known to Cæsar. Let me lean upon thee. So. I—take me to the light, Master."

"Light? Light? I know no light. I know no way from this utter darkness. My torch was extinguished in the filth, and we are lost."

Then said the servant, "I know the way. I have been here oft before, Master."

"Thou!" cried Simon. "Conatus! Thou?"

"Even I, Conatus, thy servant. For once I saw thee, Master, come down the stair a little distance. And later, being fearful of Cæsar and him they call Thanatos, I too came down the way of Minerva, seeking in heathen beliefs a solace and refuge from the terrors of the world. I, too, was lost. And, wandering here in filth and darkness, yet, by trying, I did find an exit—yonder, straight ahead, the

nearest passage and the straight-up stair. And so I found the way on the other times whenas I came."

And when they had got up out of the darkness and into a court of half-light which, though it belonged to Simon, was yet unknown to him, being part of the house of Ophidion, then said Conatus: "We are not better, but worse off, than before we went the deep, dark, stercoraceous way. But hold me in thine arms, dear Master, till I perish. For lo! it is nearing the end of the ages, and I come to Christ."

"Christ! Conatus, art thou a Christian?"

"First thou, then Christopherus, then thou and he together."

"I! I! Sayest thou 'I'?"

"Yea, Master. Thou wast for me as it were a sign from heaven. And all the Jews, be they not also signs? And I, I have tried to serve thee like a Christian servant. I have tried. Christ Jesus, I have tried."

And Simon covered the man's face with his own splendid garment. He heard the sound again of the solitary treadmill—that which he had so distantly listened unto in his own dim garden. Being in the deeps of compassion and of fear because of this, that he had lost his servant, he said: "I will find the weary one at last, and will comfort him."

But the sounds had ceased, or ere he had found the mill. And the servant that had treaded the mill, lay stretched beside it, and was even as Conatus. And the servant that had treaded the mill was Amahnah, Child of God, and God's peculiar gift to him, Simon.

He lifted up his voice then for Amahnah, and, weeping, said: "I might have had thee by me for a blessing and a comfort all these many days, O Amahnah, had I not been blind. But it is even as thou, Conatus, hast truly declared—the end of all things. And now the Gift of God, so long neglected by me, is of no more life upon this earth."

It seemed to him, in fact, as if eternity had begun to envelop him already. And then—trumpets were blown, and he knew well why. The full, imperious utterances reverberated from wall to wall, from stone to stone, about the hostile and treacherous city, calling, calling for him, the Jew, even Simon the olden, from far-off, sheep-filled Cyrenaica.

Yet he said (there being that within him which did cause that he should do this): "There is throb of life within me. And other servants yet await me than those which be dead in my house. Why should I die?

"Yea, by the strength of mine arms, which the years have not abated, and by the strength of the Lord also that is still within me, and will work as once before it worked for him of Gaza, yea, by both these things I swear I will not die for Cæsar, or be in any wise his dimachærus, but will deliver the Land."

He went into the street.

And behold, Vulgus was there! He came to Simon, and was a-drunken.

And laid hold upon the Jew, saying: "See! I will try thee again. Even as Cæsar tried thee, and as I did try Defectus before the very gates of thy house, so will I try thee now, here at the seat of sewer-justice. Wait till I get up the lid of yon sewer."

But Simon, stretching the man on the ground, laid over his breast a great stone which was there for building. And so he would truly have gone to escape, but that the soldiers, an innumerable party, came with trumpets and weapons. And they took away his swords.

They brought him to the amphitheater, saying: "The games this day are in honor of the Emperor's genius, thy sovereign Lord, the Lord of All this World and that to come. Thy turn is not as yet, therefore wait in this cuniculum." So they departed, leaving a guard.

And Simon beheld that he who guarded was a treacherous man—one that might be purchased, if but the way were seen. Leaped in his soul a flame of hope. Said he to Jehovah: "O Lord, thou hast remembered me!" Unto the fellow: "At Ostia and at Alexandria, at Patmos, Pontus, Corinth, Rhodes, and many other harbors, are multitudes that await me—if only I escape these walls. Therefore see! If thou sufferest me to elude thee and to give thee harmless wounds, I will pay thee of a surety a most excellent pearl, the perfectest jewel which ever the eyes of avarice grew mad upon—the price of fifty Romes, ten thousand Cæsars. The dearest gem—"

"Pay!" said the man.

Simon brought arm and mouth together, and bit out the place wherein he had buried the pearl.

The guard took away from him the flesh, and began to part it with his sword's point—this way, that, endeavoring to discover the pearl.

And Simon looked with bated breath—

For nowhere was the pearl.

Flesh, flesh; all, all, was only flesh. Into the very sluices of his own protecting arm had gone away the treasure, leaving merely a corruptible lump.

The guard cried, "Be accursed!" And a roll of thunder sounded above, as it were a great voice of many people shouting in heaven.

But Simon of Cyrene stood amazed, saying only, and that to himself: "Lost, lost! In the end, my wealth is merely as my flesh—corruption."

Then came from the amphitheater (like a trumpet of doom) the voice of him that edited the games: "Simon of Cyrene, dimachærus splendens!"

The gates before him opened, yea the bars thereof did turn, disclosing a way leading out over the sands.

Now, as the man stepped into the arena, there came back to him the course of all his life; first, the beginnings of years in far-off Cyrenaica; then himself a herder of his father's sheep; again the mimicry of the Mocker, Trivialis—whereat his cheeks did fire; he caught once more the accents of Jehovah, which he had heard in his father's tomb—"And when I have no further need of thee, I will break thee and yet keep thee;" and then he saw, coming with singing and with light, the sunny-headed Greek, him that afterward had become his well-loved Master, the idolizer of intellectual and physical joys, even Lampadephorus of Athens. Then he beheld himself allured by the Egyptian priestess—and fallen; next, by her of Petra—once more fallen; yet again by the Syrian Abaddone, and yet a third time fallen. He saw himself in the belly of the Babylonia, a miserable captive, but free forever from idolatry; then a shepherd in Judea with Berith and the children, however a discarded and black-gowned priest; next a disciple of the strange man, Parush (ten thousand forms and mock observances); then there was Christ—once, and yet again, yet still another time also. He himself, even Simon, was coming from the country. And he saw the cloud of dust that poured through the Gate of the Gardens, beheld the thundering multitude that issued from that cloud, caught sight of Him of Nazareth, was seized and compelled to carry the cross (oh, that bitter and contaminate cross) and all the concentrated sufferings which the man of flesh and iron had endured since Golgotha because of his carrying up the hill the tree of Christ, shot through his wrong-wracked mind in one great bolt of fire.

Then he looked about and became aware again. He saw myriads of heads like rolling apples, ranked and filed in the cone-shaped amphitheatre. And all the innumerable eyes looked down upon him pitiless. The heads wagged, their mouths cried curses on the Jew, mockery at his religion. One came that gave him twain weapons.

And he looked again—to the farthest portion of the amphitheatre.

His pore-blind eyes beheld—high upon his shining podium—great Cæsar, by his side, Thanatos, the empty-hooded, and Ophidion, called Sarcogenes.

The editor of the games cried once more: "Simon of Cyrene, dimachærus splendens, who will fight for Cæsar with men from the whole earth."

Shouted the multitude, "Let the man die for Cæsar! Hail, Cæsar! God Cæsar, lord of all that is flesh!"

Simon looked again, and saw awaiting him, before the podium, a horde of old-time enemies; enemies from East and enemies from West, enemies from South and enemies from North: Krieg, the warrior-king of Germany, and his many sons; Scythes, the Scythian, and Hiber, the Spaniard; Persa and Indus; Egyptius, Arabs, and Ethiops; Spartanus, Britannus, as well as innumerable others—fighters from all the fields of time, standing together in fatal fellowship, making one against him, Simon of Cyrene. He remembered the prophecy of Jehovah-Jireh: "In the end shall all the nations of the earth be gathered together against thee into one place." It was, indeed, as if the end of the world had come, for, already on this day, multitudes had perished, and even Sarcogenes and Cæsar, they too, would perish shortly. And all this generation, in its passing, should be only a type of the passing of all peoples yet to be.

But more and more, therefore, the energies of Simon seemed to arouse in him (as had become his way before splendid difficulties) to germinate, to multiply, to become of almost infinite extent—as though the eternal life that was surely in his veins were being summed up utterly, gathered together, focussed and concentrated into this one finite, but supremely determining hour.

Simon stopped in his course across the sand, and cried aloud: "Is this my portion of the Armageddon, Cæsar? Even so: I thank thee for this opportunity." He prayed, "O Adonai, Adonai! 'Tis I that love thee truly. Now that my handful of days has slipped between my fingers, I will fight for thee as oft I should have fought before. And woe be unto these heathen, for I will offer up to thee upon this day a sacrifice that shall be high pleasing to thee. Prepare, therefore, O idolaters, for I am in myself both Saul and David, Gideon and Samson, and a thousand other dimachæri unto God."

At this there stepped forth out of the throng of his enemies, a stately man with head of living light. He dropped his swords and came up close with both hands open, crying: "Brother!"

And the pore-blind Jew did look, and look, and look yet once again.

Then said he, "Christopherus! My brother!"

But Thanatos cried out, "On! On with the games! Let the flesh perish!" And Ophidion echoed, "On! Let me be a-pleasured!" And all the multitude that filled the seats of red and wild amusement echoed, "On! On with the games! Let Simon of Cyrene fight."

But Simon of Cyrene said, "I have changed my mind this hour, O Cæsar, and I will not fight. For I remember well, Christopherus, the lesson thou hast taught me. And often I did promise me that, should we ever meet again, thy ways should become as mine. Be therefore at peace. Thou art indeed my brother. And these, all these, though misguided much, they too are brothers: I do love them. And so I do conquer you all."

He lifted up his swords and brake their blades. And behold, the twain were hollow, and would not have served in any case. For so it ever is with the things of Cæsar.

And there stepped forth out of the crowd behind Christopherus, both Nea Diatheka and Cheerfulness and Joy. And Simon knew his own children, and embraced them.

Then gave Cæsar command concerning Simon, and from somewhere near the Lord of this World stepped forth one bearing an insistent blade.

So, in a twinkling, it appeared to the Jew as if the great walls and all the substantial universe—sand, heads, and sky—had burst the bonds that kept them things material, becoming nothing but a mere luminous dust, or cloud of disorderly atoms. And the cloud (it might have been a moment or it might have been ten thousand generations) dividing in the center, disclosed a way of utter brightness, a brightness that was brighter than the brightness of the sun at noonday.

And lo! at a certain distance in the light, attended by happy hosts innumerable, who sang to the Jew a sweeter welcome-song than ears of mortal man could ever have endured, came Jesus of Calvary, smiling as on that hour when Simon, with his strong, enduring arms, took up the heavy burden of the cross.

And when Jesus had come anear, He said unto the man: "Simon, Simon, wilt thou not come to me now?"

The Jew answered, "Thou knowest, O Lord, I would an if I could. But thrice I did reject thee utterly. Moreover, I was myself rejected by Annas, the great High Priest in Jerusalem."

Said Christ (and all the angels bowed their heads beneath their wings to listen) "I am the High Priest of all High Priests, and I do not reject thee. Since first I called thee in thy father's tomb, thou

wast my chief representative upon earth. Behold the peoples who have come to me through thee."

"Me? Jesus! I?"

"Thou. Hast thou not borne for me more than the mere wood upon the hill? been also Abraham, not solely Isaac, unto me? acceptable priest, as well as perpetual (and perpetually belovéd) sacrifice? Even in thine idolatries thou taughtest the peoples me—although thou knewest it not. I am thine Adonai, whom thou lovest. See! unto thee come I."

And Simon, the Jew, with his heart aflame, because, after his long life of so much bitterness, he had found the friend of all friends—even Jehovah-Jesus—dropped straightway at the Savior's feet, crying with all his heart and soul and strength of mind, even as the Lord himself had predicted: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Adonai!"

THE END

244.2
Sh24
Shastid, T.H.
Simon of Cyrene, dimacherus
splendens

244.2
Sh24